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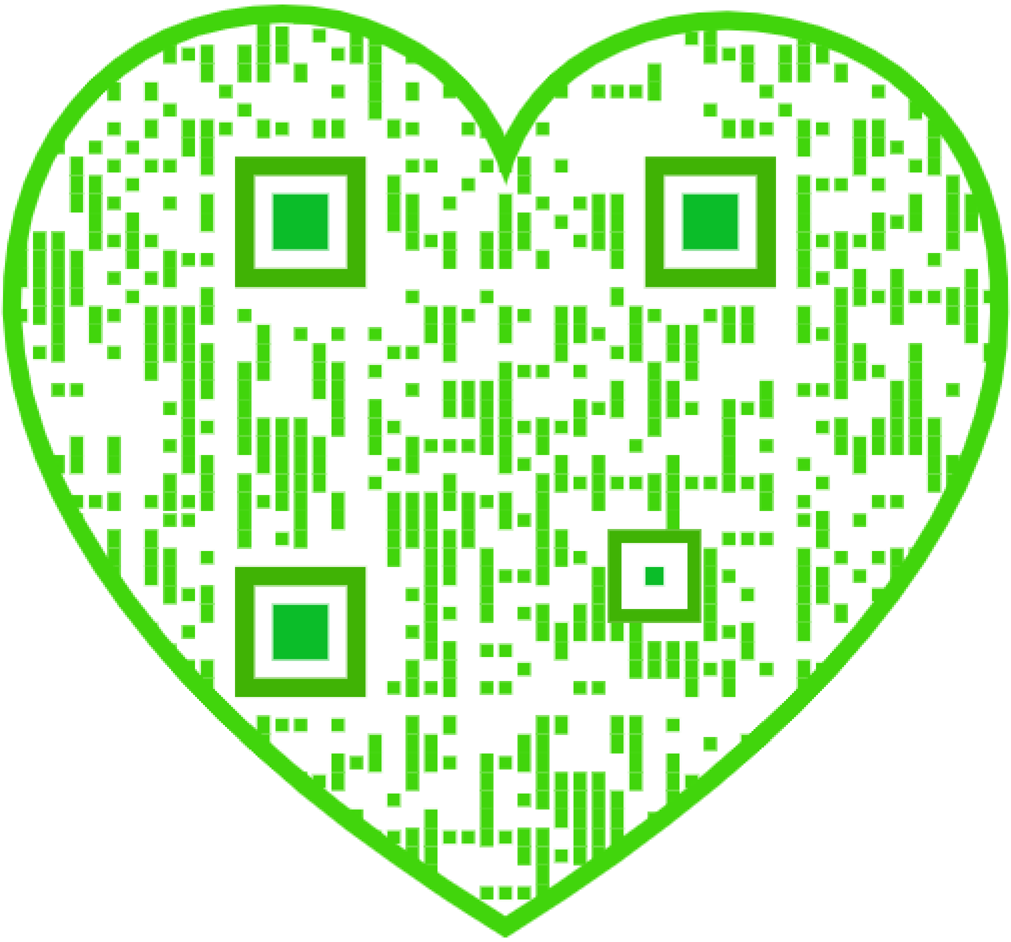

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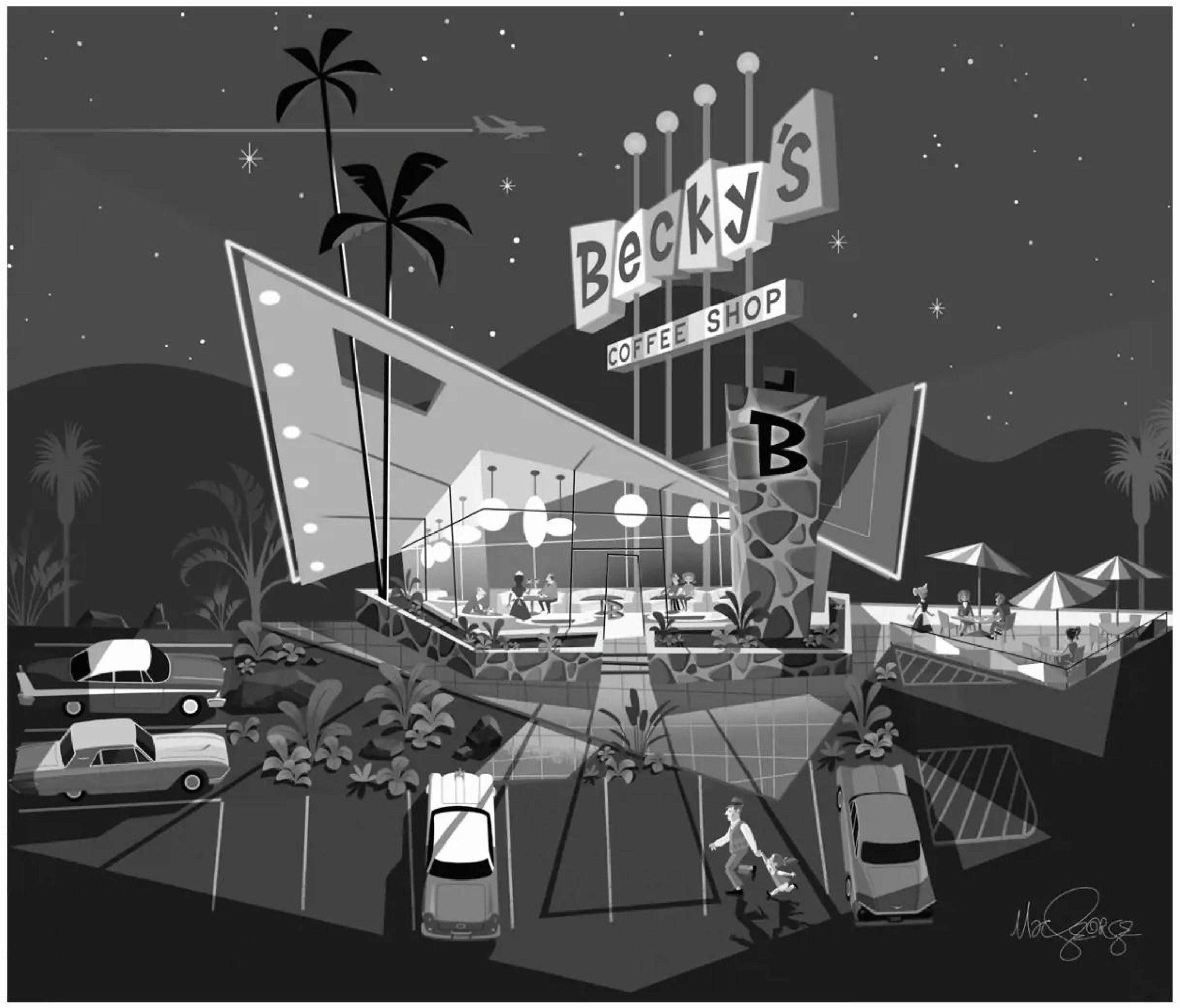
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editor's letter

ROAD TRIPPING

MY DAUGHTER STARTED preschool this year, a big milestone for her—and me. This means that our little family is having our first official "summer break" this year. Sure, every summer is filled with the usual extra-curriculars like traveling, beach trips and backyard barbecues. But this year, summer has a special demarcation, so I feel compelled to make the most of it. I've been plotting and planning all the adventures we can go on this summer. Maybe a long drive to Arizona to visit Taliesin West with a stay at the Hotel Valley Ho? Or a weekend in California's central wine country with a hike at the Cal Poly Architecture Graveyard? As you can see, I hope to infuse a lot of mid-century design, architecture and history into my children's psyches as well.

If you've got the travel bug biting too, perhaps our paths can cross! *Atomic Ranch* on the Road, the talk & tour series we launched last year, is in full swing for 2025, with events planned for San Diego, Seattle and Chicago. In fact, next up is Boise, our cover darling for both the Summer 2018 and Winter 2023 issues. It's a whole weekend of events, from cocktail parties and trolley tours to home tours with talks and a host of insightful and educational discussions. I hope you'll follow us on Facebook and Instagram and check out atomic-ranch.com frequently to stay updated on where we'll be so you can make it for a face-to-face welcome and chat.

I can't wait to meet you all!

Jickie Torres

GET CONNECTED!

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WARMING TREND

How to create inviting, personalized spaces with layered textures, functional pieces and statement elements.

By **Jickie Torres** • Photos courtesy of **BoConcept**

FOR 2025, DESIGN IS ALL ABOUT creating warm, personalized spaces that blend functional elegance with individual flair—a natural fit for those who love Mid Century Modern style but want a fresh approach. Creating a warm, functional space with touches of individuality is both an art and a strategy, as Lily Li knows well. As senior design consultant at BoConcept San Francisco and San Jose, Lily helps clients strike a balance between MCM's clean lines and a cozy, lived-in feel. From layered textures to statement pieces, Lily's approach shows how to make a space uniquely yours without losing that iconic MCM elegance.

Here, Lily shares her insights on how to create spaces that feel both timeless and personal, blending MCM aesthetics with modern warmth and functionality.

CRAFTING A PERSONAL SPACE

One of the most exciting shifts I'm noticing is the move toward personal spaces that tell a story. Homeowners are less focused on keeping up with trends and more interested in creating a signature look that resonates with them. We're seeing warm tones like camel and rust making a comeback, along with hints of green. These colors add coziness and character while still feeling timeless. Whether it's an art piece or a statement chair, the idea is to make each piece meaningful, not just fill a room with popular pieces.

MIXING COLORS AND TEXTURES

This is a powerful way to elevate a room. Having too much of one texture can make a space feel flat, so I like to mix it up. For example, pairing a boucle fabric armchair with a smooth leather sofa creates a nice contrast. This layering adds depth and personality to a room.

For colors, I start with a neutral base and then add accents from opposite ends of the color wheel. This approach creates contrast while keeping the overall look balanced. It's an easy way to make a room feel lively without being overwhelming. When you mix materials like boucle, marble ceramics or wood, it adds tactile interest, making the space more engaging.

PRIORITIZING FUNCTIONALITY

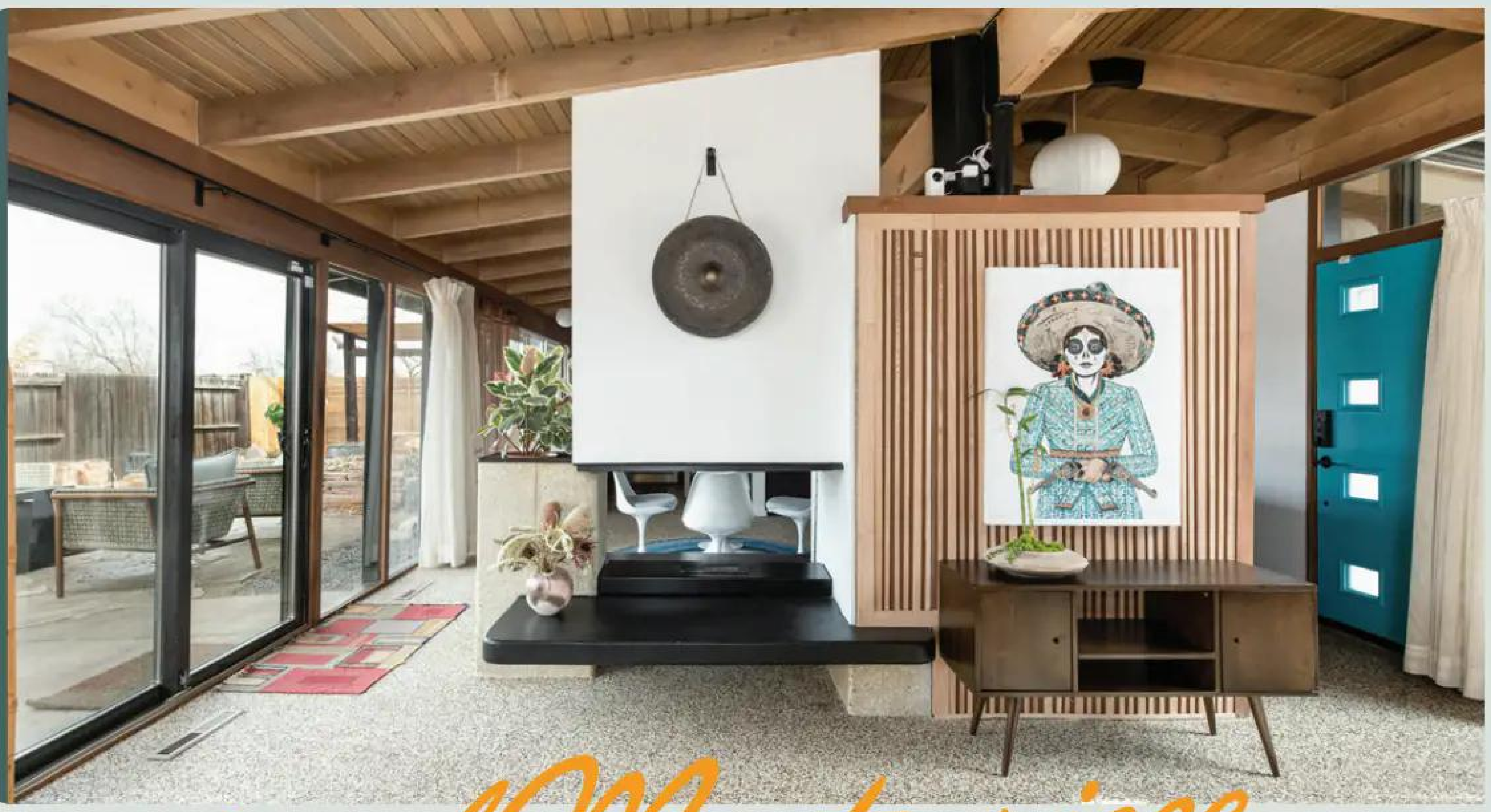
In recent years, I've seen more clients asking for designs that offer more functionality, especially as people are choosing to live in smaller spaces or need rooms to serve multiple purposes. Multifunctional pieces are in high demand—and for good reason. At BoConcept, our extension dining table is one of our most popular items. It's compact for everyday use but expands easily when you have guests. Another favorite is a coffee table with built-in storage, which helps keep smaller spaces tidy.

The idea is to have versatile furniture that can adapt to different situations. For example, lift-up coffee tables can double as dining spots or workspaces while still looking stylish.

MAKING A STATEMENT

For smaller spaces, I often recommend letting the sofa be the focal point. A bold color or texture can make the sofa stand out and bring the room together. In larger spaces, unique armchairs, eye-catching lights or a sculptural coffee table can serve as focal points.

When picking a statement piece, it's essential to think about how it fits with the rest of your décor. It should be something that draws attention without clashing with everything else in the room. A statement piece should feel like a natural part of the room, not a distraction.



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Colorado boasts thousands of stunning Mid-Century Modern homes, with several exclusive enclaves where every residence showcases this distinctive architectural style. These specialized neighborhoods feature homes designed by renowned architects who embraced the quintessential MCM elements: natural materials like stone, brick, and wood, along with signature glass walls that create a seamless connection between indoor living spaces and the natural surroundings.

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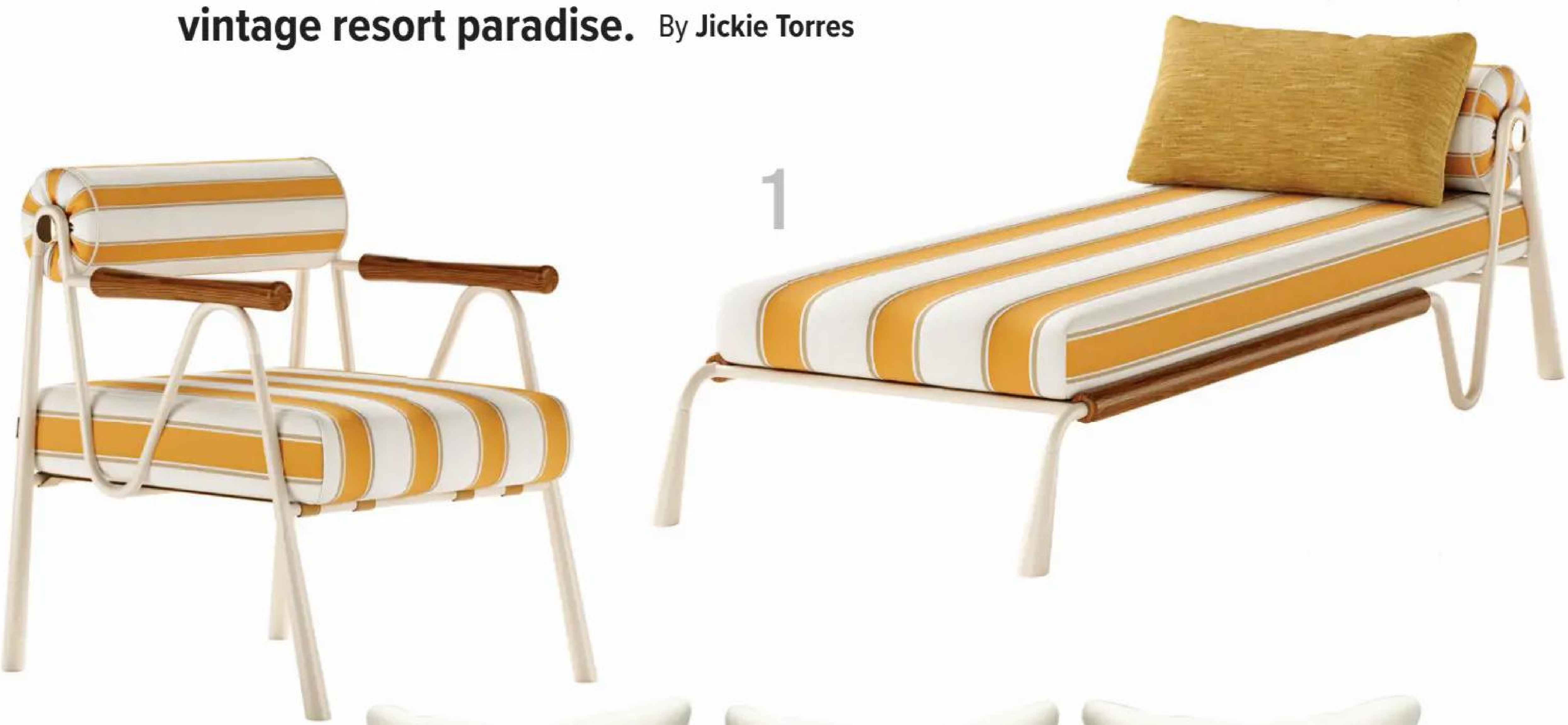
TROPICALIA

These '60s and '70s-inspired outdoor picks will have your summer patio looking like a vintage resort paradise. By **Jickie Torres**



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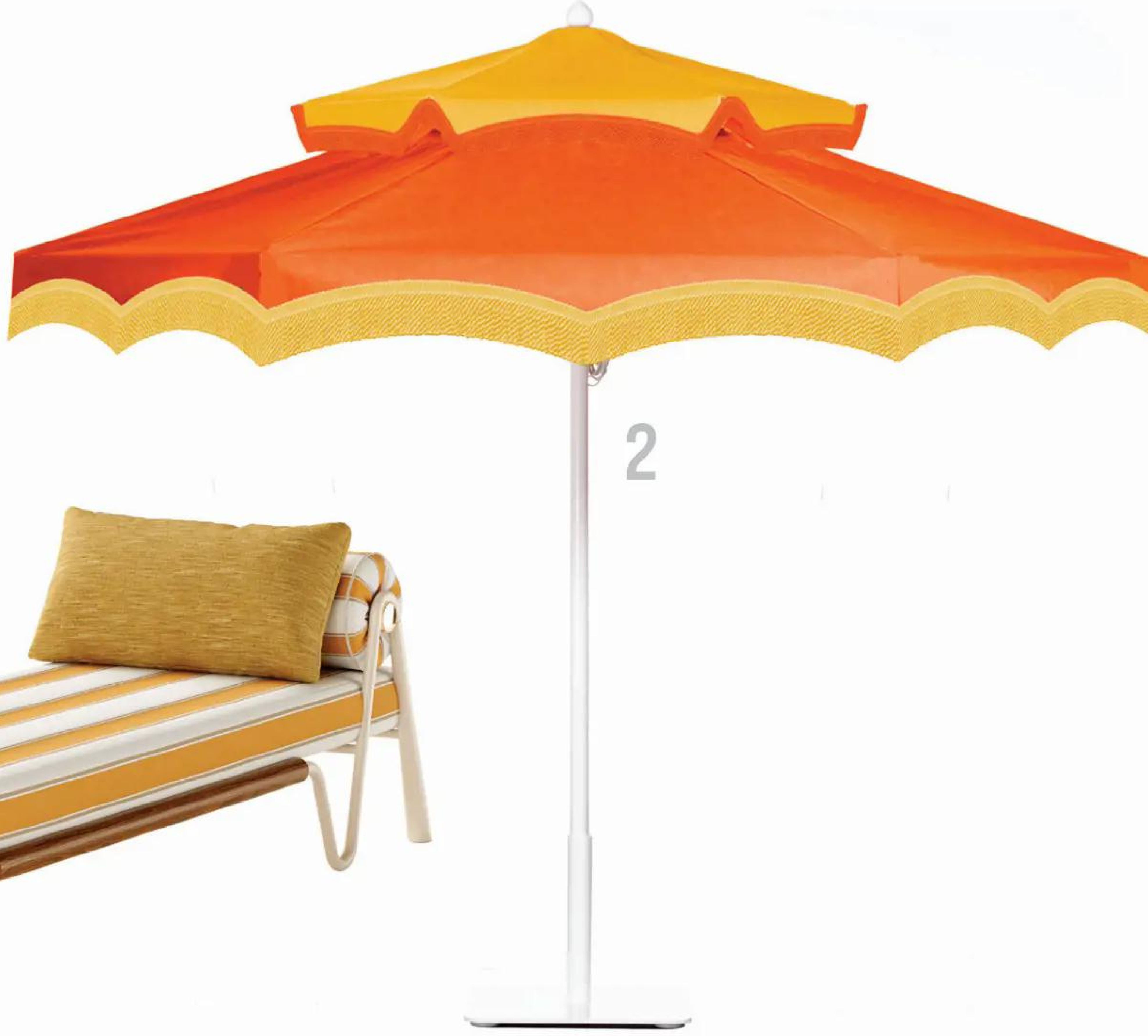

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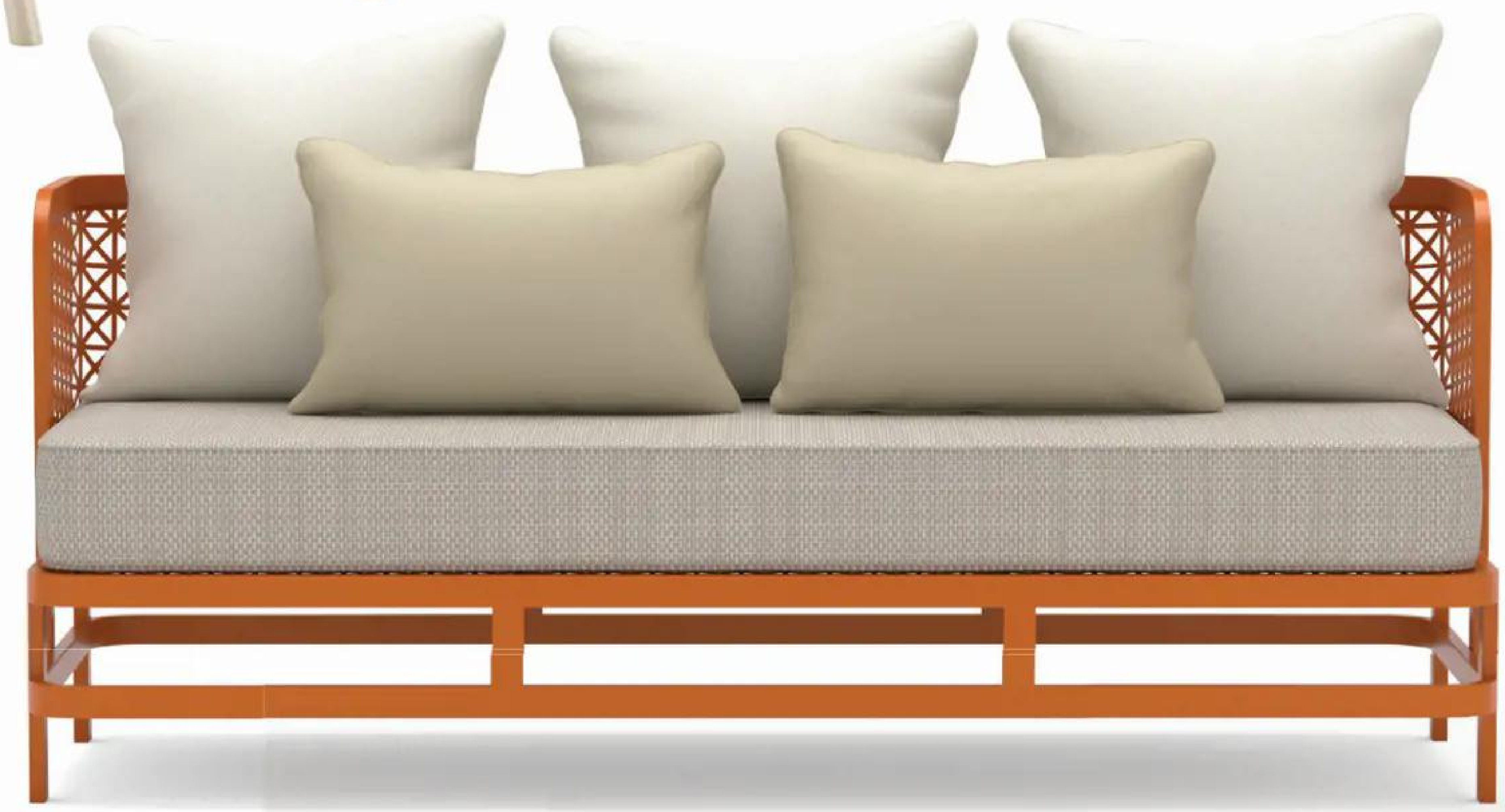

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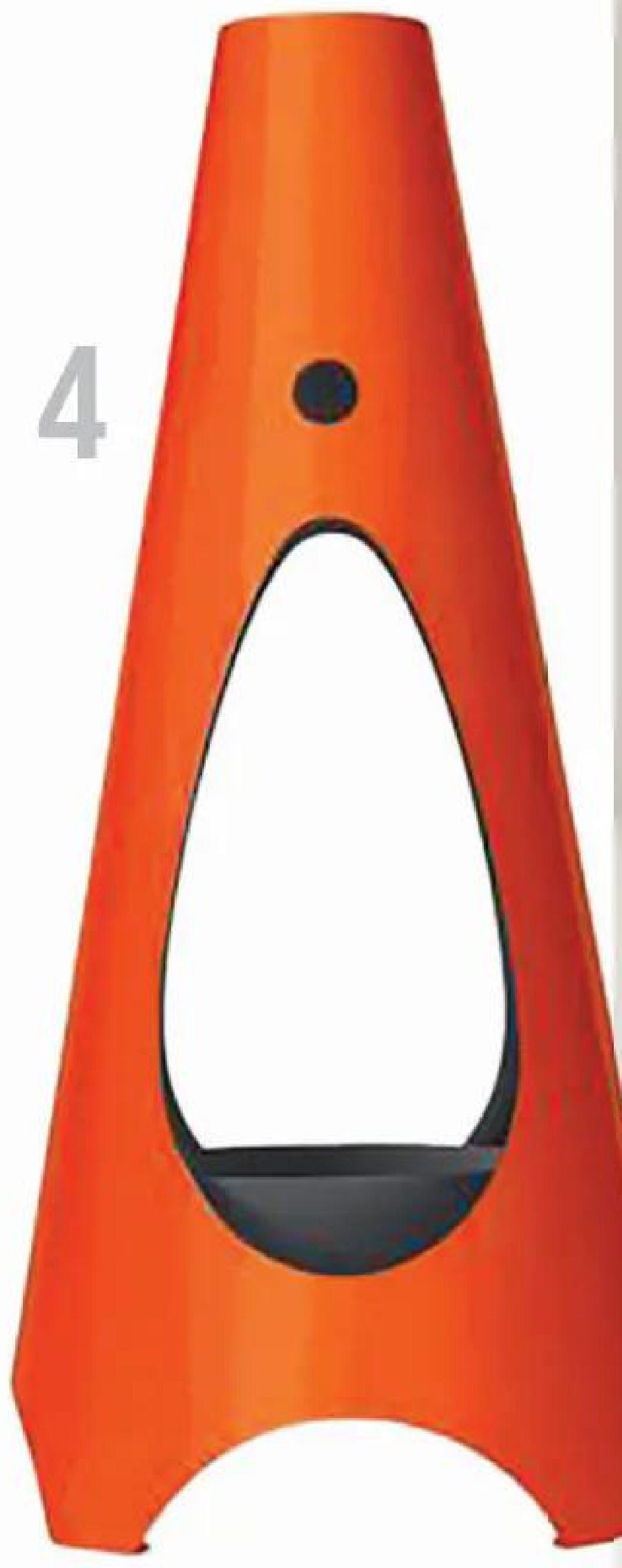

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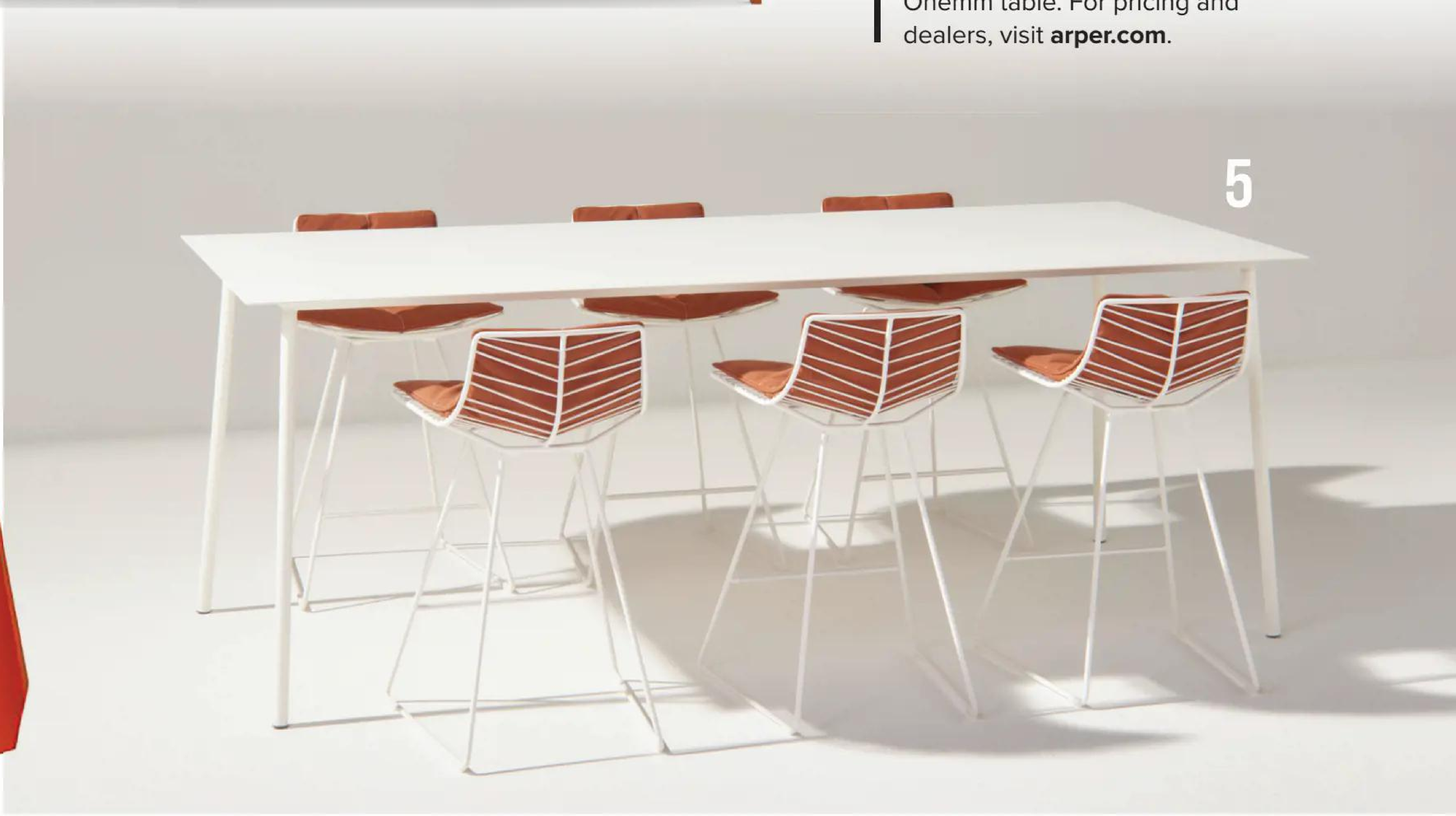

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1. Bela lounge chair and armchairs with gold-plated brass details and iroko wood handles. For pricing and dealers, visit **mezzocollection**.com.

2. Regency® umbrella in Cabana Orange Stripe with short keyhole-style valance, from $4,500. Visit **santabarbaradesigns.com**.

3. Ananas sofa in spice, $8,995. Visit **ngalatrading.com**.

4. Modfire fireplace, $2,150. (855) 663-3473 or **modfire.com**.

5. Leaf stool with cushion and Onemm table. For pricing and dealers, visit **arper.com**.

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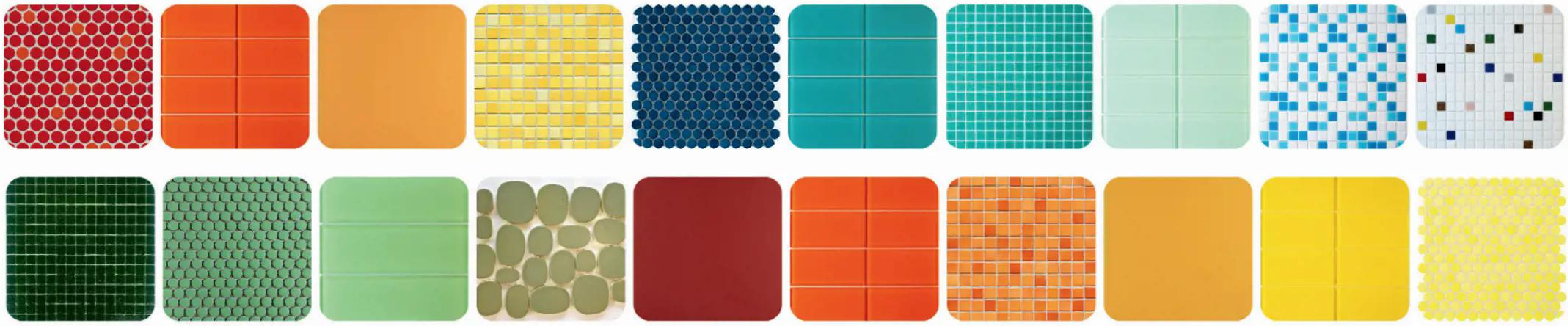

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Period Picks

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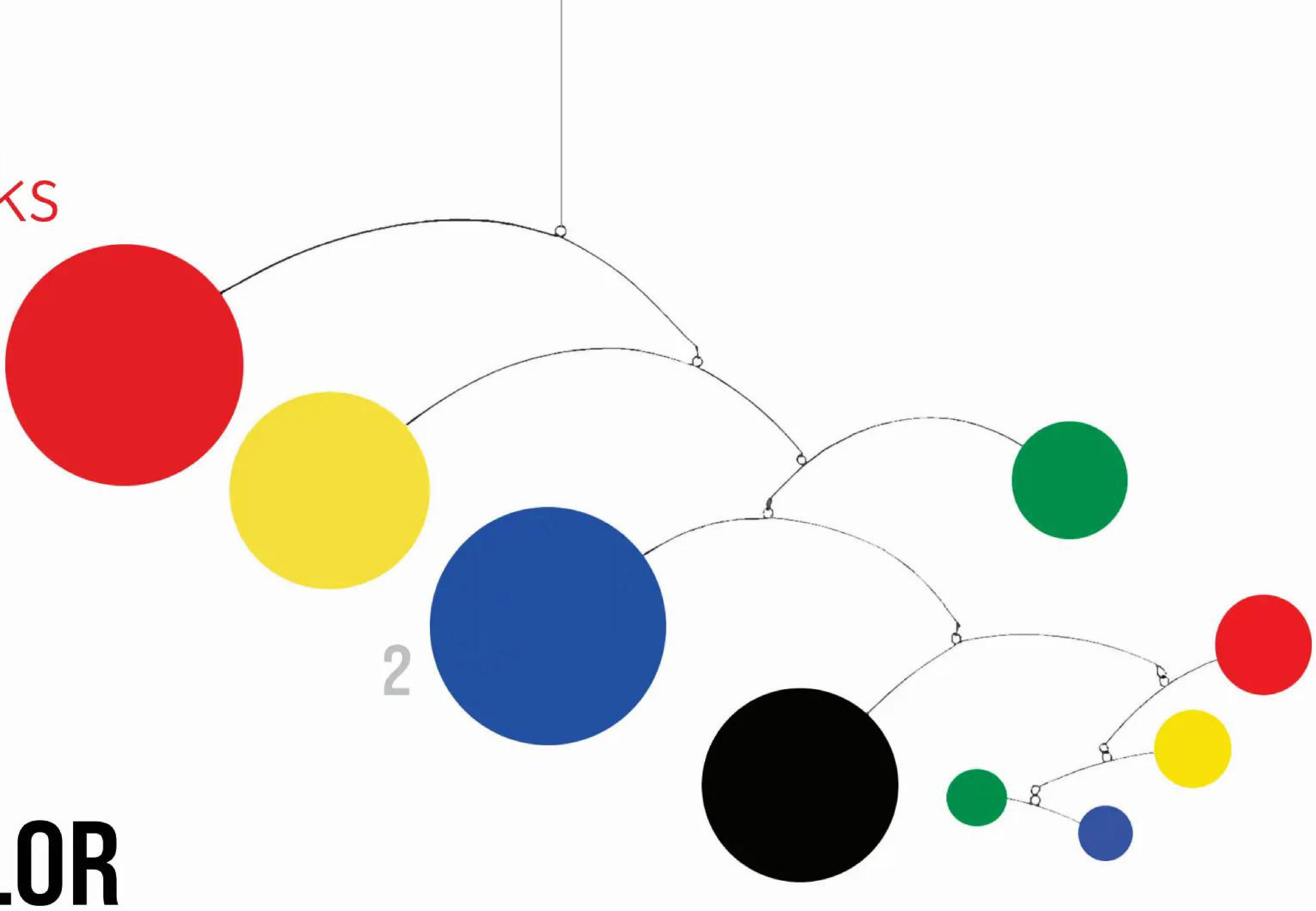
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COLOR CONNECTION

Channel your inner Eames or Girard and inject your décor with some vibrant mod style.

By **Jickie Torres**

3

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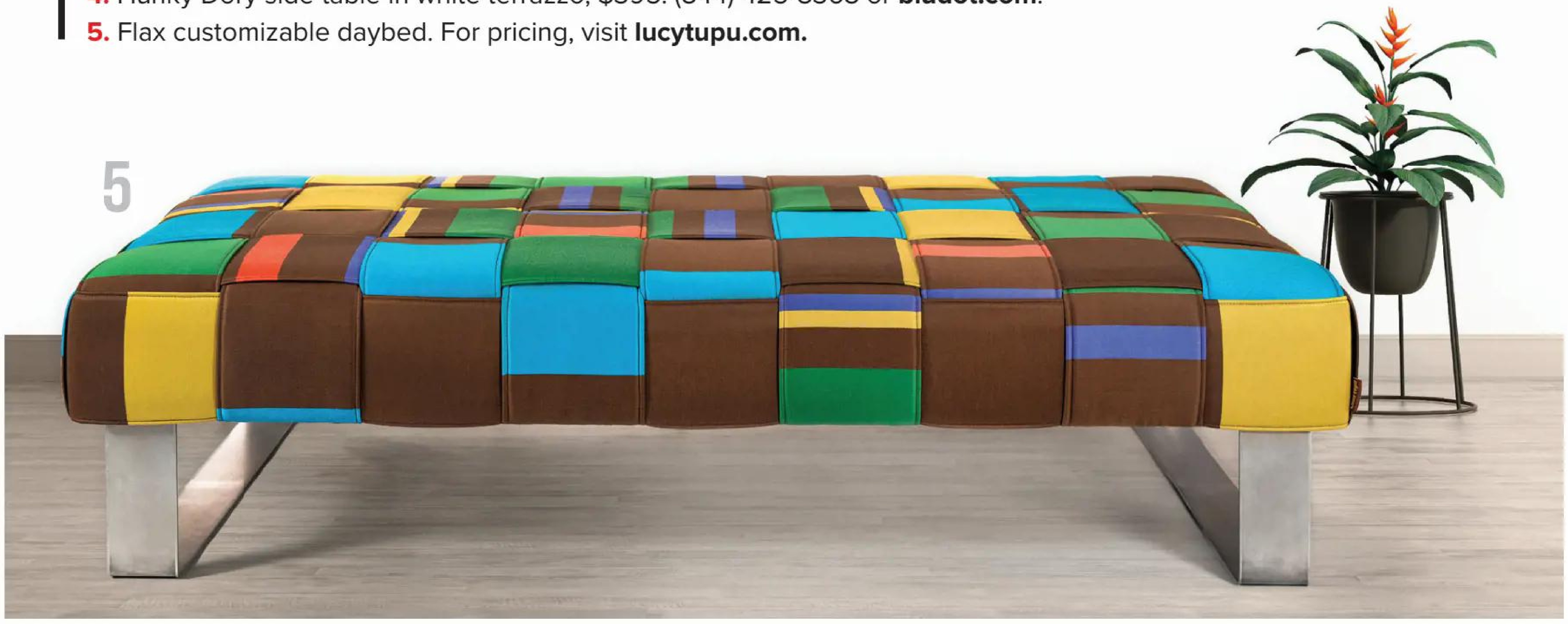
1. Solstice trio pendant light, $3,335. Visit **leebroomusa.com**.
2. Mod mobile in multicolor, $199, small. $299, large. Visit **atomicmobiles.com**.
3. Horizon sofa, $2,869. (714) 317-9342 or **casaramodern.com**.
4. Hunky Dory side table in white terrazzo, $395. (844) 425-8368 or **bludot.com**.
5. Flax customizable daybed. For pricing, visit **lucytupu.com.**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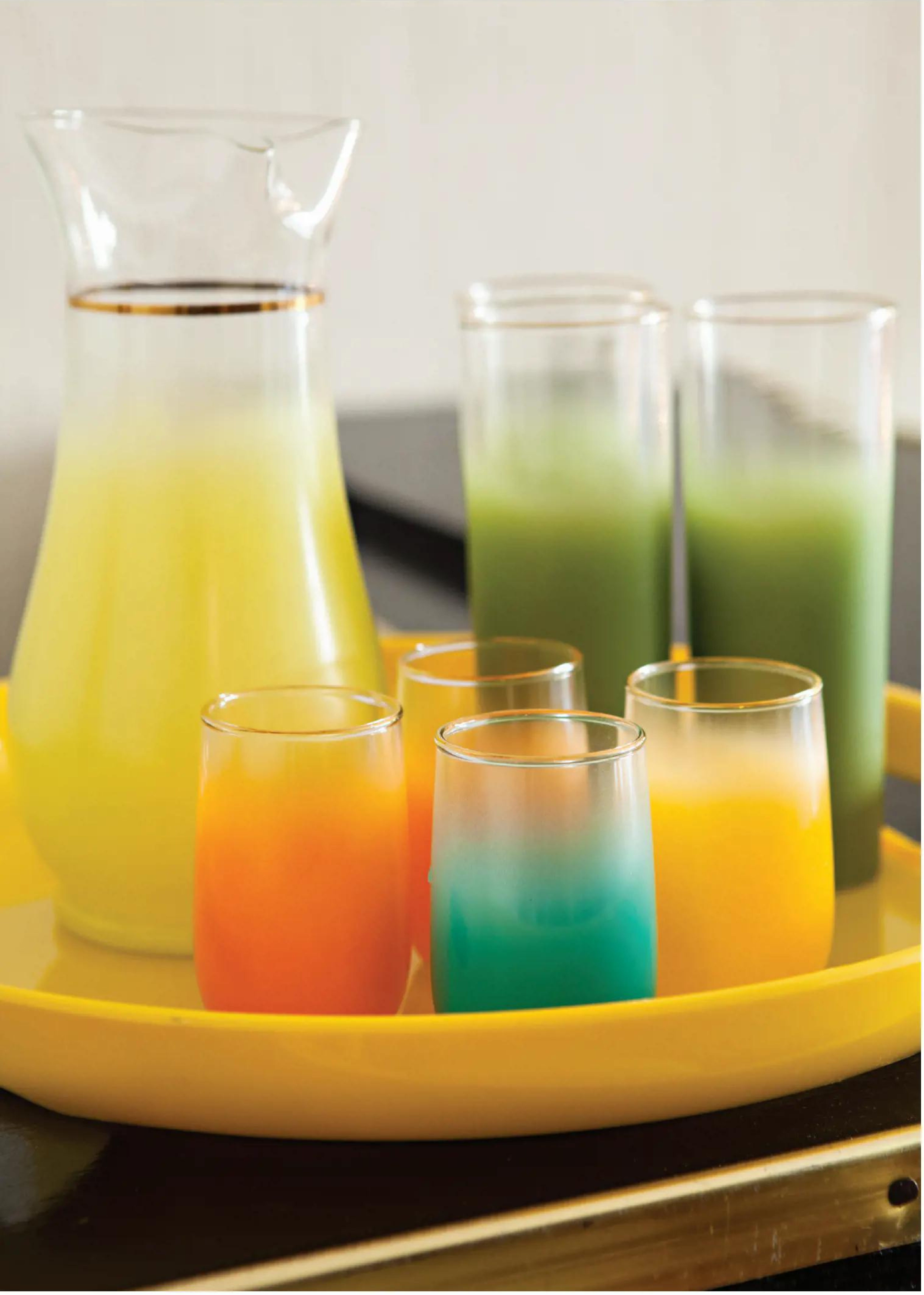
A TOUCH OF GLASS

Vintage Blendo glassware serves up colorful mid-century charm.

By **Meryl Schoenbaum** • Photo by **Jickie Torres**



YOU'VE NO DOUBT SEEN these iconic serving pieces that come in every color of the rainbow. The fun and fanciful variety makes Blendo glassware look just as fresh today as it was in the 1950s and '60s, when the West Virginia Glass Company of Weston, West Virginia, and the Anchor Hocking Glass Corp. of Lancaster, Ohio, produced them.

Blendo glassware was a staple at summer barbecues during the era, thanks to its bright, frosted hues and sturdy feel. Its colors were applied onto the outside of the glass, giving it additional heft. "The style is characterized by a bright neon or pastel solid base that fades as it goes up the glass and has a gold rim," says Mandy Heth, a Blendo collector and owner of Etsy shop VintageBaublesnBits.

Blendo was at the peak of its production in the 1950s and '60s. It came in a wide variety of colors and sets: juice, water/lemonade and cocktail pitchers and glasses, and serving ware (salad bowls and dishes, chip-and-dip trays, oil and vinegar cruets, and salt and pepper shakers). The serving pieces were popular wedding gifts at the time. As the cocktail era, which was revisited on the TV show "Mad Men," boomed, so did the sales of Blendo.

This is a collectible that should be used and enjoyed rather than stored away for safekeeping. "They are really fun entertaining ware, even today," Mandy says. It's not hard to find individual pieces in the $20 range. A complete set (pitcher and six glasses) from the 1960s was recently offered on Etsy for $59.95. Intact gold rims drive the value up, as many are worn from years of use.

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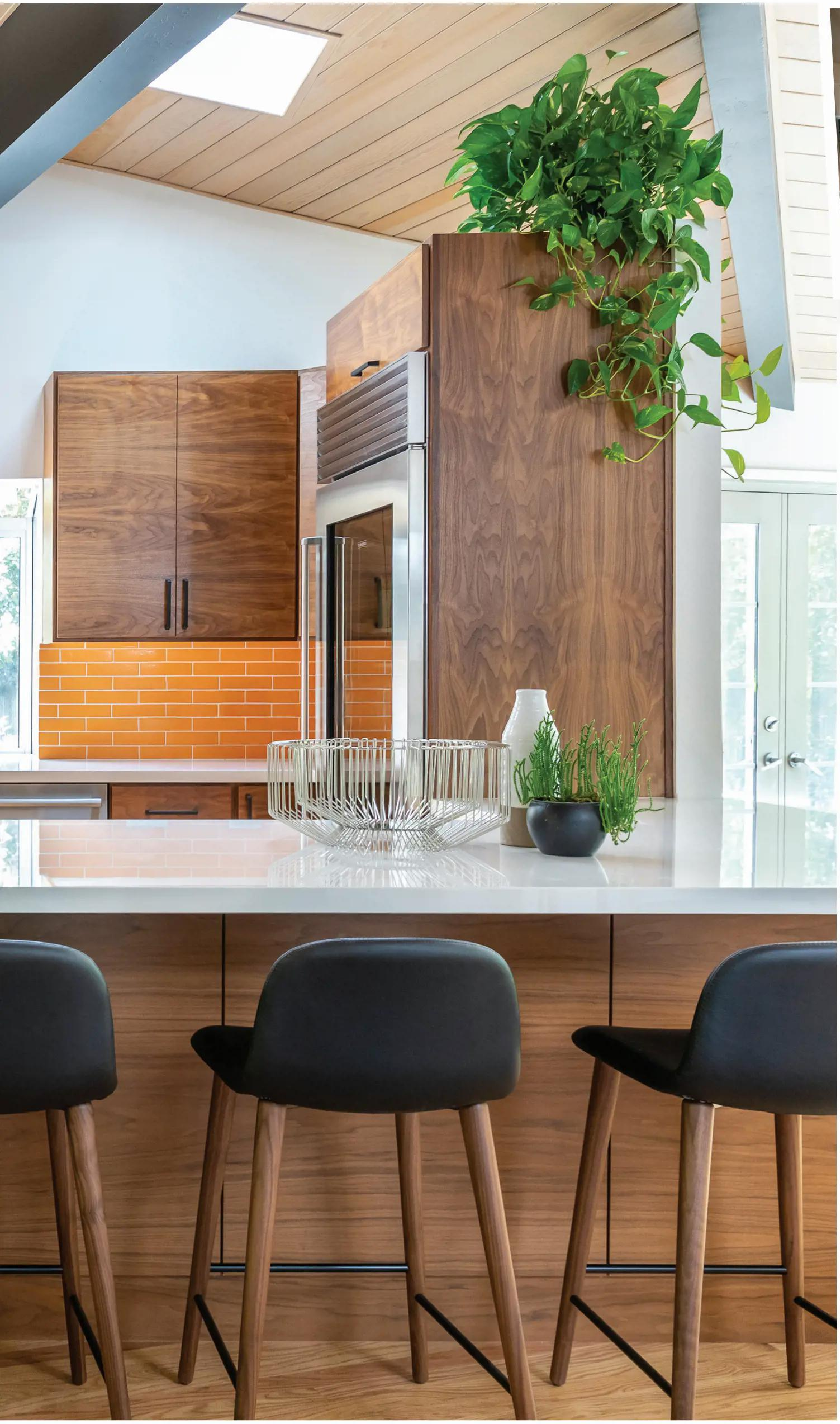

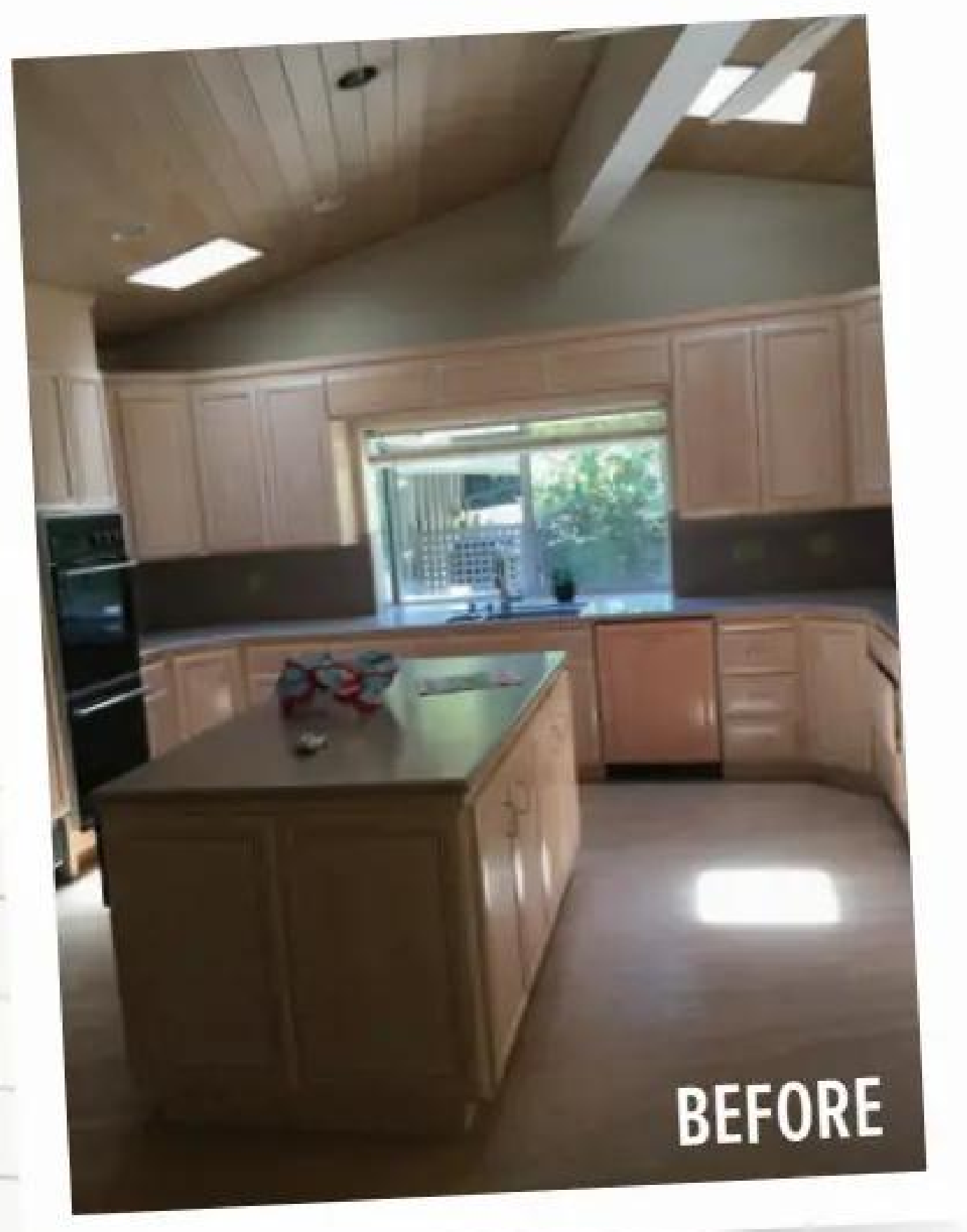

A CUSTOM RETROGRADE

After suffering a bad '90s remodel, this kitchen received a lively restoration that incorporates MCM design with contemporary needs.

By **Jolene Nolte**
Photography by **Kat Alves Photography**
Styling by **Rebecca Ward Design**

IT'S A FAMILIAR STORY: Mid Century Modern house changes hands, suffers a bad remodel and, if the story has a happy ending, a new homeowner who loves MCM comes along and wants to restore the kitchen back to its mid-century roots. Such was the case for this 1963 Sacramento home in the Arden Arcade neighborhood. The homeowner reached out to Rebecca Ward at Rebecca Ward Design to undo the bad '90s remodel and addressed their culinary and entertaining needs.

"The client wanted semi-pro appliances and decided on a 48" BlueStar range with double oven and a 54" hood so we can make sure his deep fryer could be accommodated if it was countertop next to the range," Rebecca explains.

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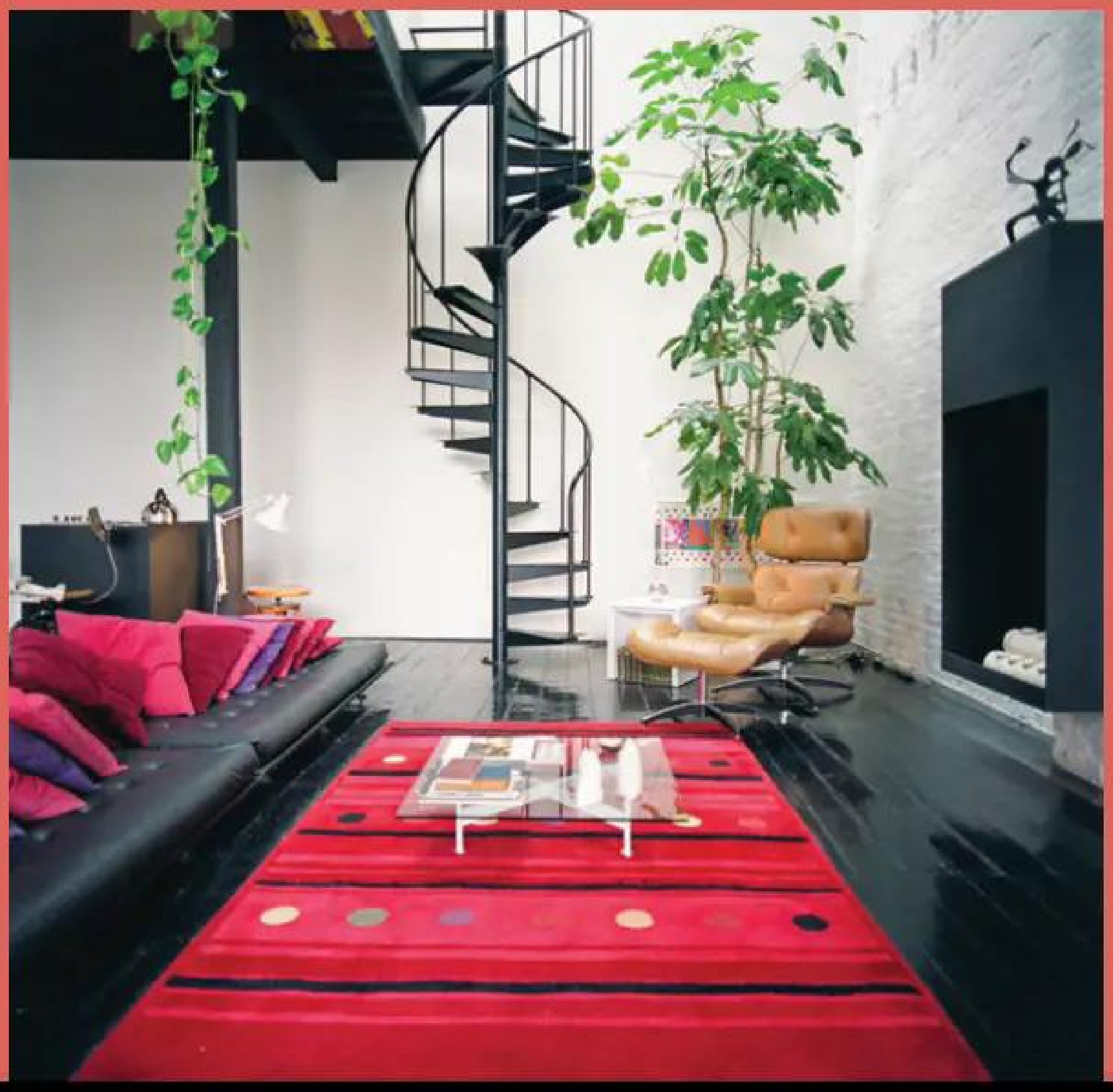

Above: Unidentified photographer, *Two Unidentified Dancers at the Erlanger House*, ca. 1975, Courtesy of the University of Illinois Archives.

R: Phillip Kalantzis-Cope, *Jack Baker Loft and Studio*, ca. 2017.

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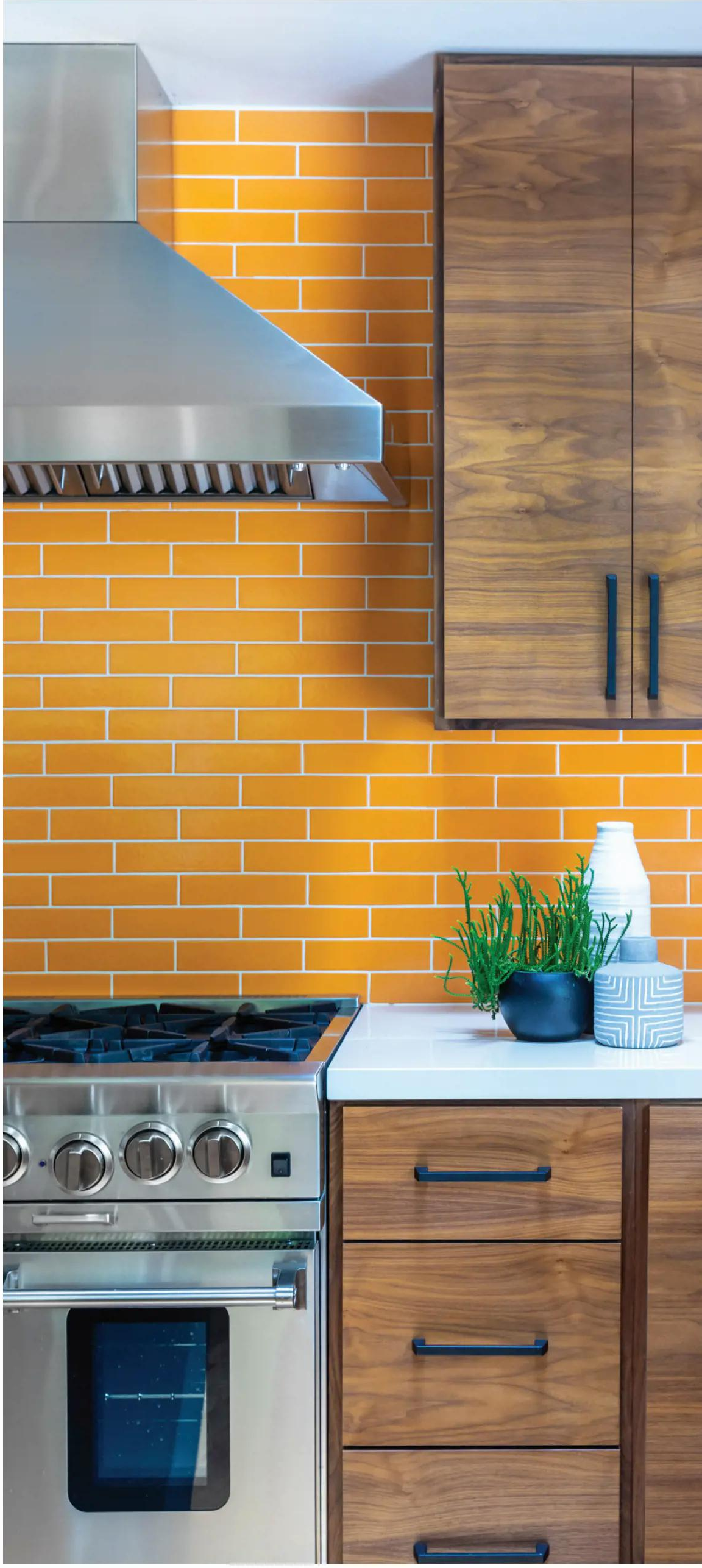
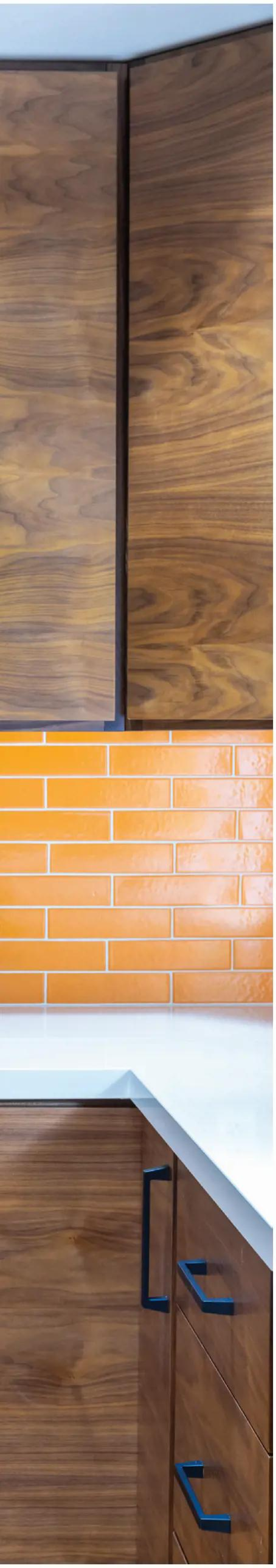


The semi-pro Blue Star range provides for contemporary cooking needs, while the perfectly color-matched orange Fireclay tile brings a splash of carefree mid-century vibes.



RESETTING THE VISION

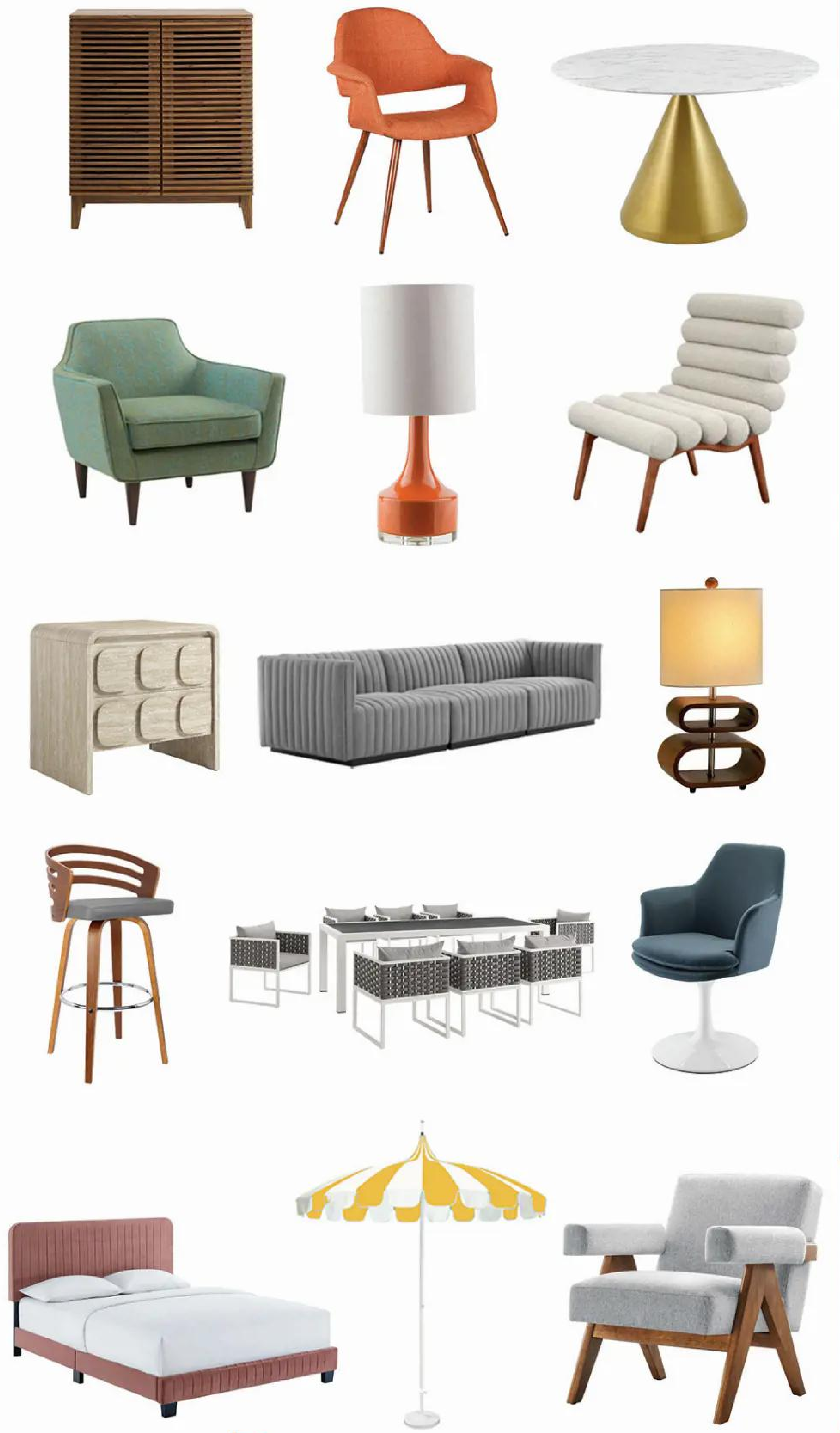
In addition to turning back the clock from the '90s, there were some contemporary conveniences to consider in this kitchen renovation. Aside from making the space amenable to entertaining, the new homeowner also needed Rebecca to design for a countertop that could withstand a deep fryer and steam microwave.

The vision was to reflect the home's mid-century provenance but also provide for the homeowner's current 21st-century needs. "Leveraging our client's existing collection of Mid Century Modern furniture pieces, we curated a cohesive ensemble that effortlessly marries style with comfort, the addition of carefully selected rugs and accent pieces of furniture ensuring a seamless integration of old and new," Rebecca explains.

CURATED DESIGN

Given the homeowner's desire to entertain, Rebecca and her team "moved the eating counter out of the dining space to let the chef be more on display to the guest and open conversation and views to the dining area," Rebecca says. The pickled oak cabinetry with traditional detailing went out the door and in its place came horizontal grain matched walnut cabinets.

The otherwise neutral space pops with a quintessentially MCM orange. They first chose the Dunn-Edwards Bittersweet color for the front door. After playing with other mid-century color options for the kitchen, they decided to color match the kitchen tile with the front door. Rebecca and her team worked with Fireclay to find just the right match. "It was a fun process of being sent samples, deciding that one is too red, that one is too yellow and this one is just right!" Rebecca says.



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The homeowner wasn't sure about whether to do wood or new concrete flooring. "We had painted the walls a crisp white from the neutral it was before and painted the white beams black, so keeping the wood flooring was the right move," Rebecca says.

MODERN VIBES FOR CONTEMPORARY NEEDS

Kitchens need to be high-functioning spaces, and this one was no exception. While Formica was popular in mid-century kitchens, that material doesn't make sense for homeowners with semi-pro kitchen appliances. Rebecca doesn't fuss too much about period-authentic materials. She explains her kitchen-renovation philosophy: "It's best to mix modern convenience with the aesthetics of mid-century. For example, the durability of the Dekton Halo countertops provide a clean, modern aesthetic and much more heat resistance than the more original materials of Formica and Corian that were common to that era." The result is a kitchen firmly rooted in mid- century design that is also functional for today's requirements. It's a happy marriage of old and new, with no sign of the bad '90s remodel. ⚛

SEE RESOURCES, PAGE 88

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It’s hard to go wrong with a classic Saarinen dining table. A large potted plant and view to the garden also embodies the indoor-outdoor connection for which MCM is famous.

One of Rebecca's favorite features of the renovated kitchen is the walnut cabinetry. Goodbye, '90s pickled oak cabinets!

KITCHEN MATERIALS: PROS & CONS

What is Dekton? Dekton is a kitchen surface material made of porcelain along with a balance of other materials to yield a surface even more high-functioning than traditional porcelain. Dekton is heat, scratch and stain resistant. It's also carbon neutral.

Formica is a laminate material, which is made of compressed paper. It has the advantage of being mid century authentic as well as durablity, ease of cleaning and many color options. However, it is not very heat resistant. It can resist short bursts of heat exposure, but you should always use a trivet with Formica to avoid damaging the surface.

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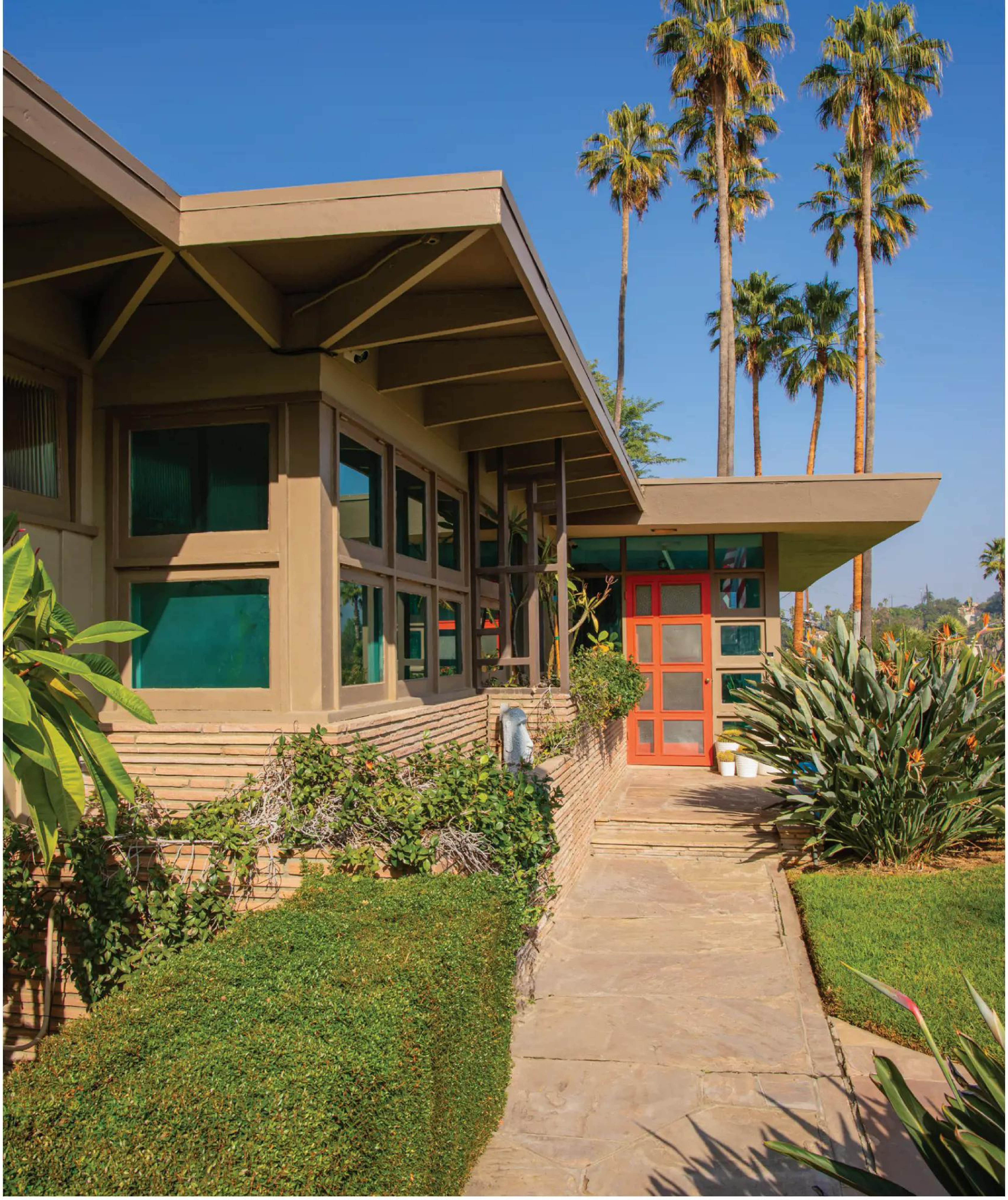
THE HOLLYWOOD HOUSE OF RIVERSIDE

This landmark 1948 home's renovation features many delightful additions—including a tiki-adorned Chi-Chi Lounge.

By **Meryl Schoenbaum**
Photography by **Bret Gum** • Styled by **Jickie Torres**

IF YOU'RE LUCKY ENOUGH to live in a quintessential Mid Century Modern home, then you already know how special it is. But when your home has been honored as a landmark by the local historical association and featured in books and documentary films, then you have even more reason to have pride in it. This home has achieved that well-deserved recognition in addition to delighting its owners and their guests.

This living room's orientation allows a spectacular view of downtown Riverside. "We're inside, but we feel like we're outside in this room," Caren says. She found the tables on eBay, but they were in bad shape, so she and her husband, Fabio, refinished the end tables and coffee table. The fireplace consists of three individual chimneys joined in three rooms. Surprisingly, the blue chairs are rocking chairs that move from the seat, not the legs.

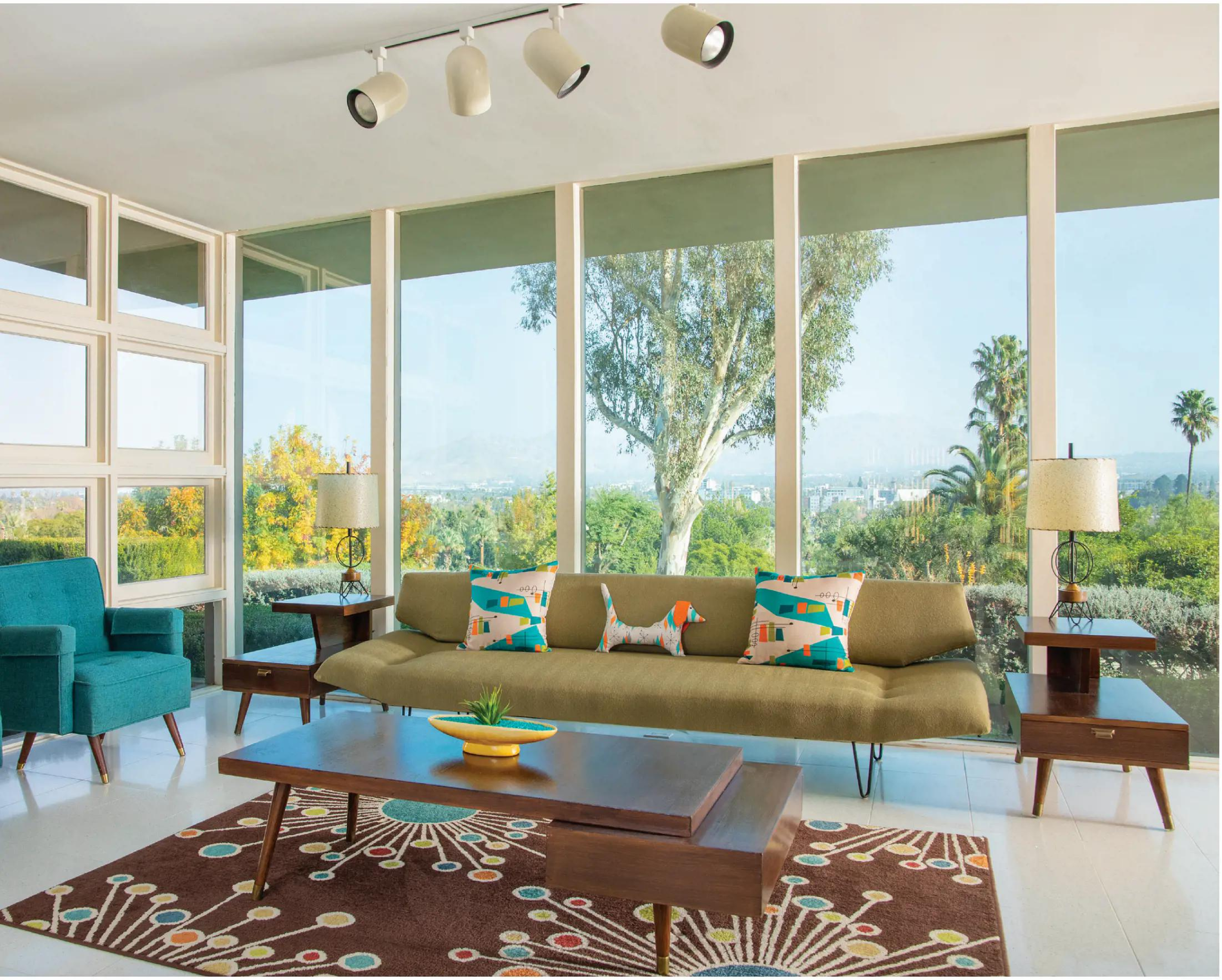


This screened front door matches the front windows. The landscaping includes palm trees, birds of paradise, plumeria trees and jasmine. Caren says in the springtime and summer the area smells “amazing.”

> “IT ALL FEELS SO RIGHT AND SO MODERN. THAT’S THE BEAUTY OF MID CENTURY MODERN ARCHITECTURE: IT’S A TIMELESS STYLE THAT TIES INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR DESIGNS IN ONE SINGLE, PRETTY BOW.”

The ranch-style four-bedroom, four-bath, glass-constructed home combines different materials to seamlessly bring Riverside, California’s fauna and flora indoors. The single-story, flat torch-down roof, rectangular glass and wood-framed building is perched high in the Mt. Rubidoux hillside, allowing for expansive views of downtown Riverside. On the west side, the lot rises fast, backing against the acclaimed Mount Rubidoux Park, with unrestricted views of natural growing eucalyptus and pine trees that serve as a playground for local wildlife. Set on a raised slab foundation, the asymmetrical linear construction with extended overhangs and a large steep driveway that separates the main house from the garage with a breezeway stands in contrast to the surrounding late-century constructions.

“Our home was built in 1948. We acquired the property in 2013 and are only the third owners,” Fabio and Caren Silveira say. “At the

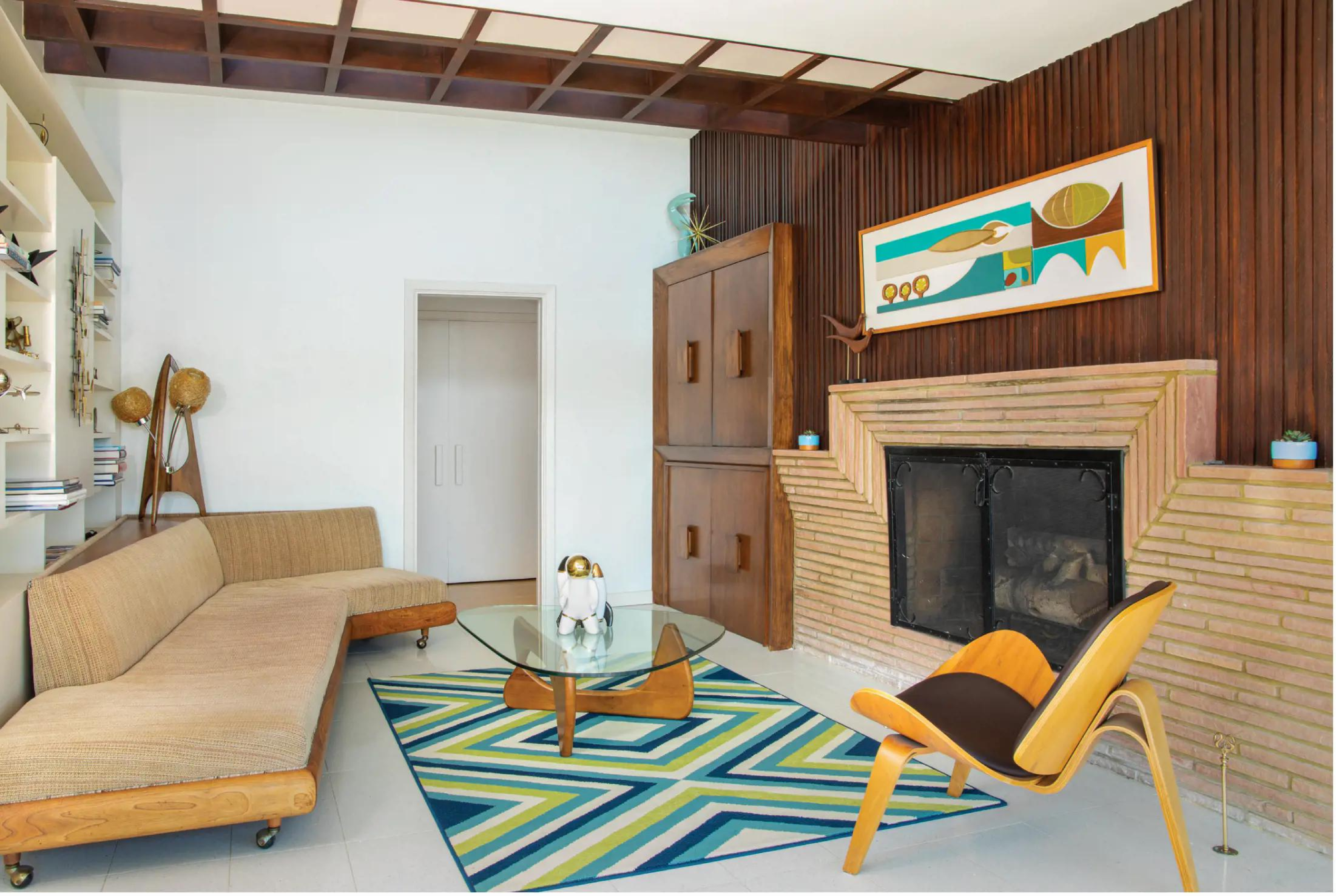


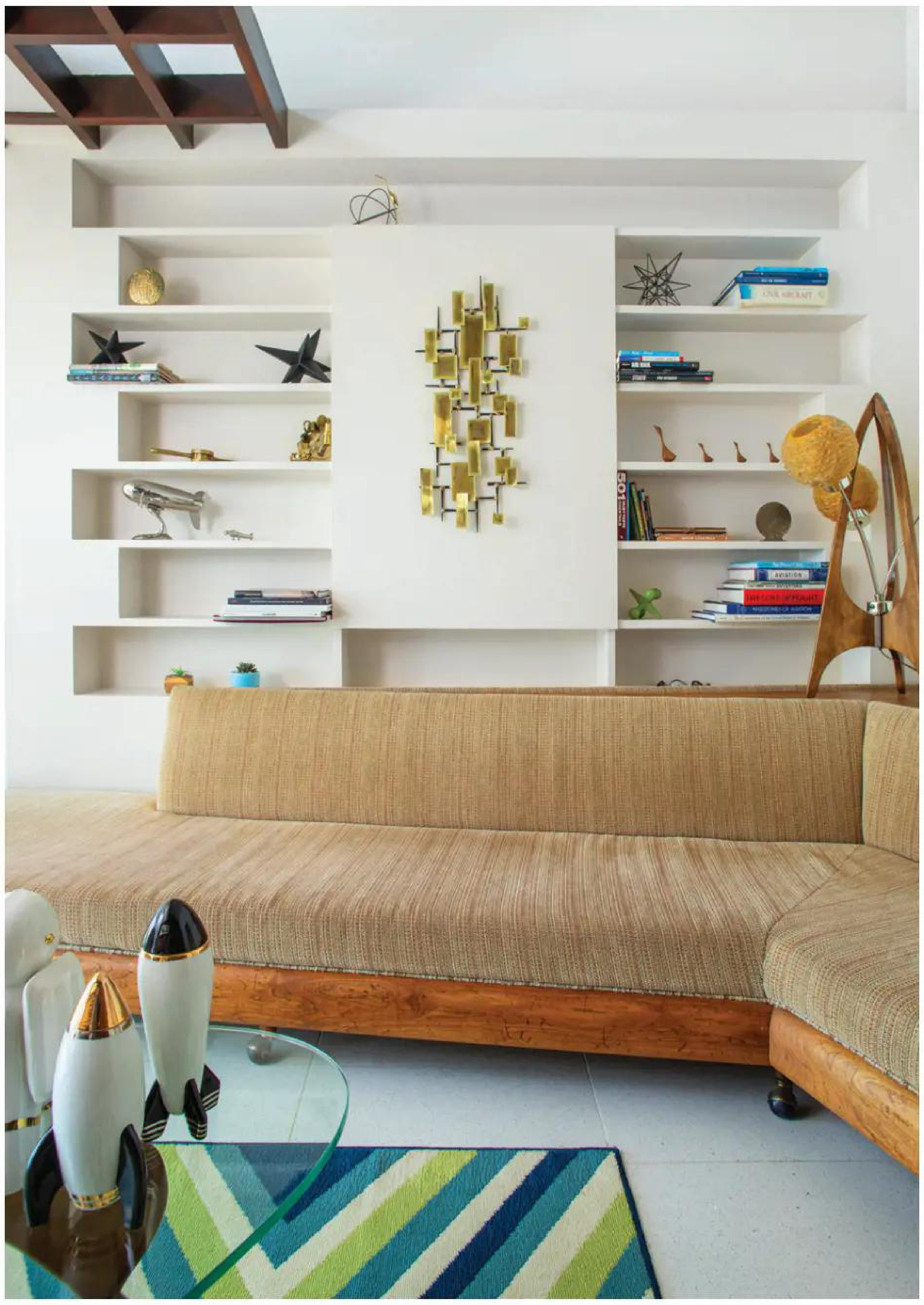
time, we were living in a massive 4,000-square-foot, two-story '80s tract home in Upland," Fabio adds. "We have always loved mid-century, so we started a quest to find something that was more representative of us. Moreover, we were looking to diminish our commute time in LA traffic. Our intention was to move to Long Beach or Orange County—somewhere closer to the beach and to LAX, where I fly out of," says Fabio, a pilot for United Airlines.

"After over a year of looking at overpriced fixer-uppers that were much 'cozier' than we were willing to live with and branching out to a larger radius than we had intended, our realtor told us: 'I think I found something.' We looked at the pictures, were intrigued by what we saw and made an appointment to go see the house the next day. As we drove up the steep driveway, we looked at each other with joy. Caren said, 'This is it!'—we knew we had found our grail. I don't believe we had even gone through the entire house when we told the realtor that we would take it. She was quite surprised, but for us it was love at first sight."

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

"While we were most impressed by the architecture, the expansive views out of the glass-framed house are what impressed us the most," Fabio recalls. "Using Frank Lloyd Wright's principle of expansion, when you first step in, the foyer has a low ceiling that expands into a dramatic, vaulted 12-foot-high open space with floor-to-ceiling windows that gives one the sensation of stepping into the nature surrounding it. It is truly breathtaking when you first see it. But while we were breathless when we walked in, we knew we had our work cut out for us."



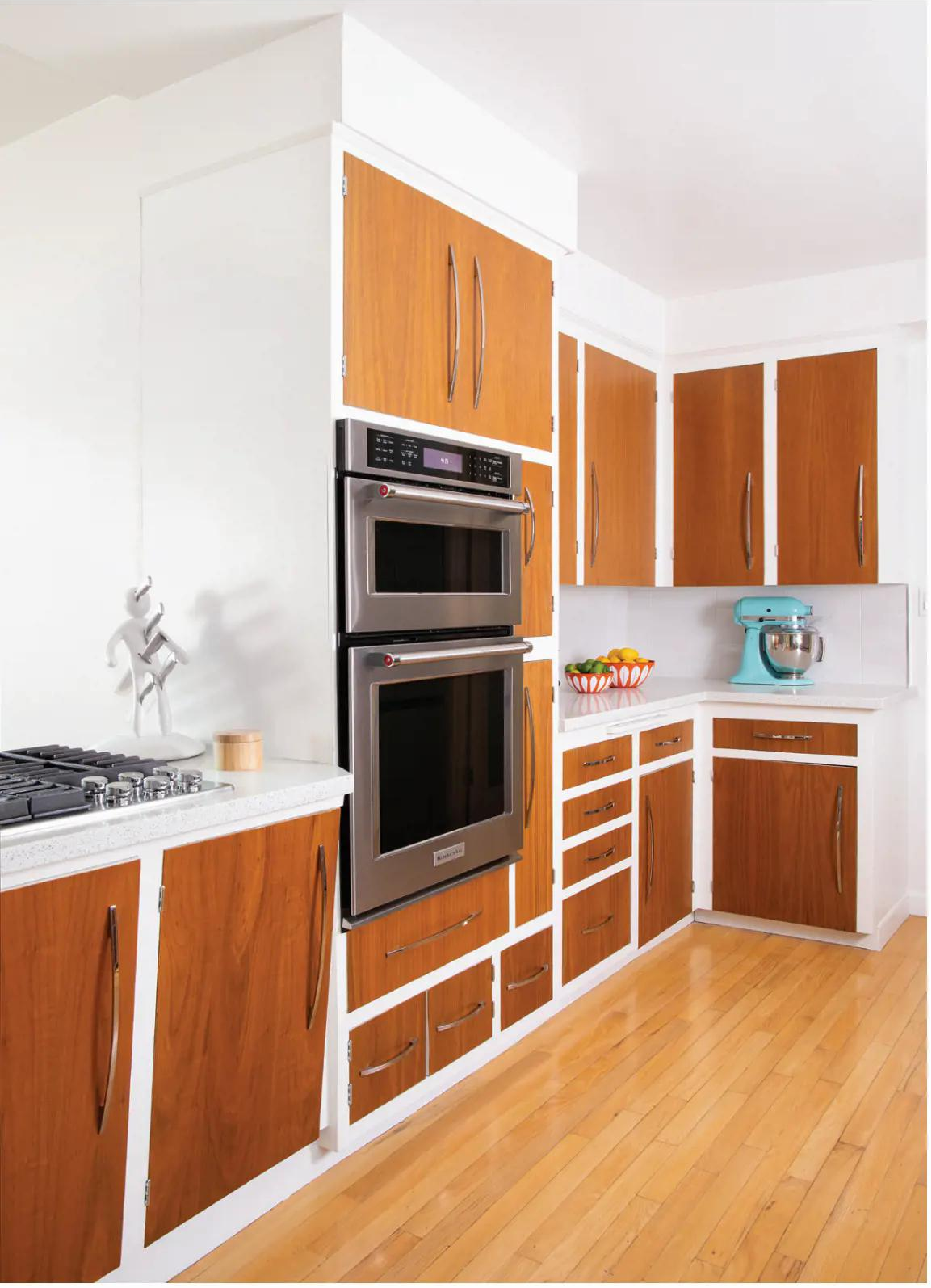


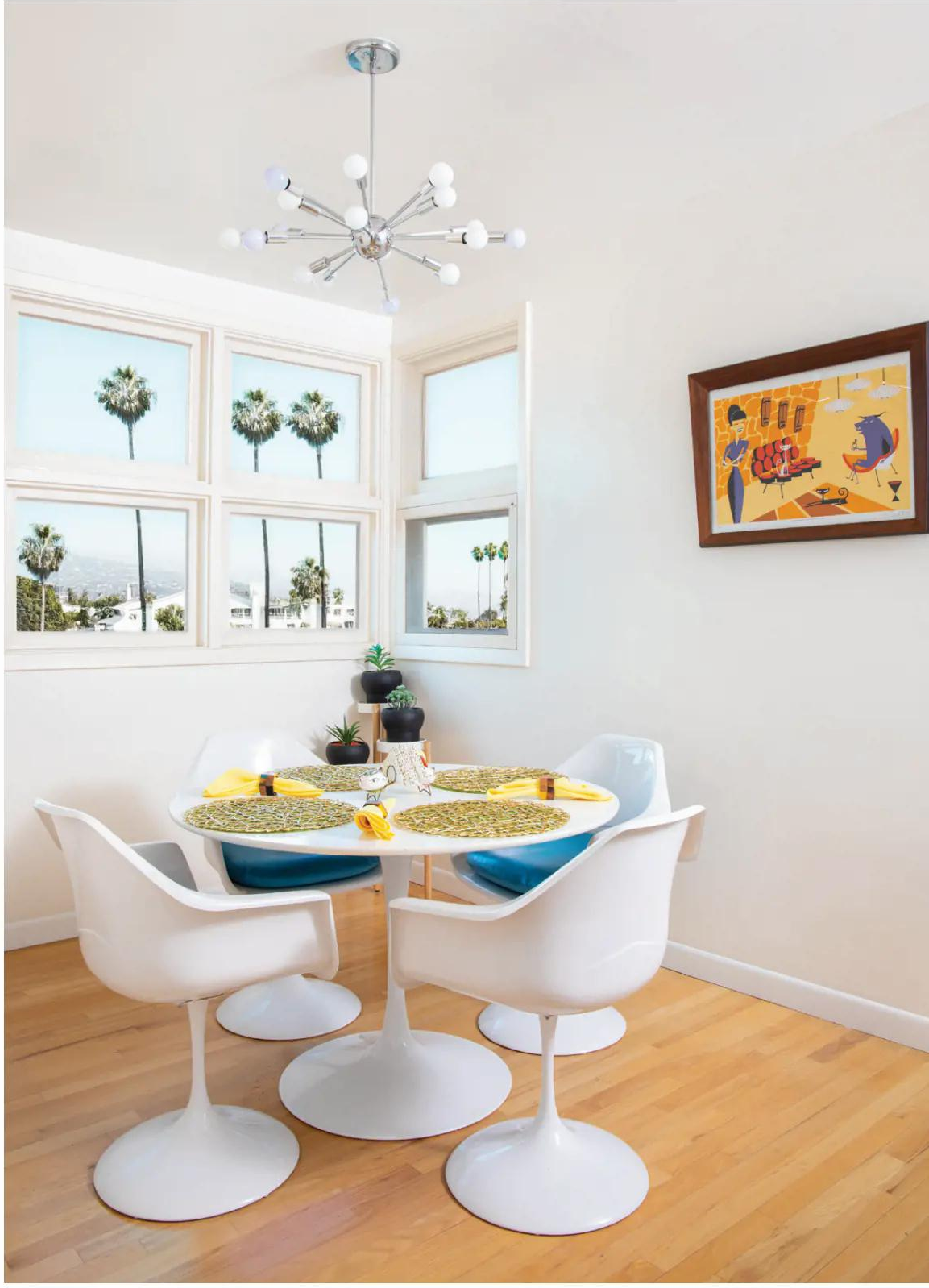
above: Caren's favorite piece of furniture in the entire house is the authenticated Adrian Pearsall Boomerang Couch in The Mainliner Room. She found it on eBay and loved the shape. The art above the fireplace is from Atomic Skyway on Instagram. Caren says the corner lamp, found at an antiques shop, reminds her of the Theme building (aka the Spider building) at LAX airport. The large doors to the left of the fireplace house a hidden wet bar.
left: This angle of The Mainliner Room shows built-in shelving with aviation books. The coffee table displays cool Jonathan Adler rocket-style decanters that relate to Fabio's career as a pilot.

Since they were still living in Upland, they decided to make the renovations before moving in. "While the original design was amazing, cosmetically the house needed a lot of love," Fabio says. "We kept the original wood floors, the built-in cabinets and the original bathroom fixtures. Just about everything else needed to have some level of work done."

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

The new homeowners wanted to maintain as much as possible of the original aspects of the house and the architect's intentions, but some changes were needed to make the house into their home. "We needed to have a space designated for a tiki room. We needed an office and a guest room. And we wanted it all to be beautifully MCM, yet functional," they explain. However, as most homeowners can attest, some renovations are easier said





above, left: Caren wanted a walnut finish on the cabinets, but no contractors would attempt it due to their unusual construction, so she and Fabio did it themselves using sheets of very thin walnut they cut, sanded, stained (using waterproof stain) and glued to the cabinet fronts. **Above, right:** The breakfast nook in the kitchen features a Tulip table and chairs from eBay that Caren took to an auto body shop to repaint it with auto paint. A Shag Store print adds modern-style life to the wall.

than done. "There were so many problems, we could probably write a whole edition of the magazine on what not to do during your renovation," Fabio says. "For instance, Caren had a very specific design for the powder room—the purple bathroom. The wallpaper she had picked out was part of her vision and was hard to find as it was made in small quantities by a small company. We told the contractor where to find it and to order it from the website ASAP as it was the only way to acquire it. Well, he postponed it for months until they got to that phase of the project, and when he finally ordered it, he ordered the wrong amount. When we tried to order more, the wallpaper was not only out of stock but had been discontinued." Luckily a small pivot towards matching paint to create an accent wall fixed that one.

Fabio points to another redesigned room the family required to make the home their own. "Besides Caren and I, the house is the dogs' palace. Billy, the chihuahua, and Sadie, the papillon/chihuahua mix, rule the place," he admits. "They have more living spaces than we do. The guest room was converted into the babies' (dogs') room. They have their own Sonos speaker so they can enjoy restful naps with some doggy tunes. And, of course, the tiki room is named after them: the Chi-Chi Lounge."

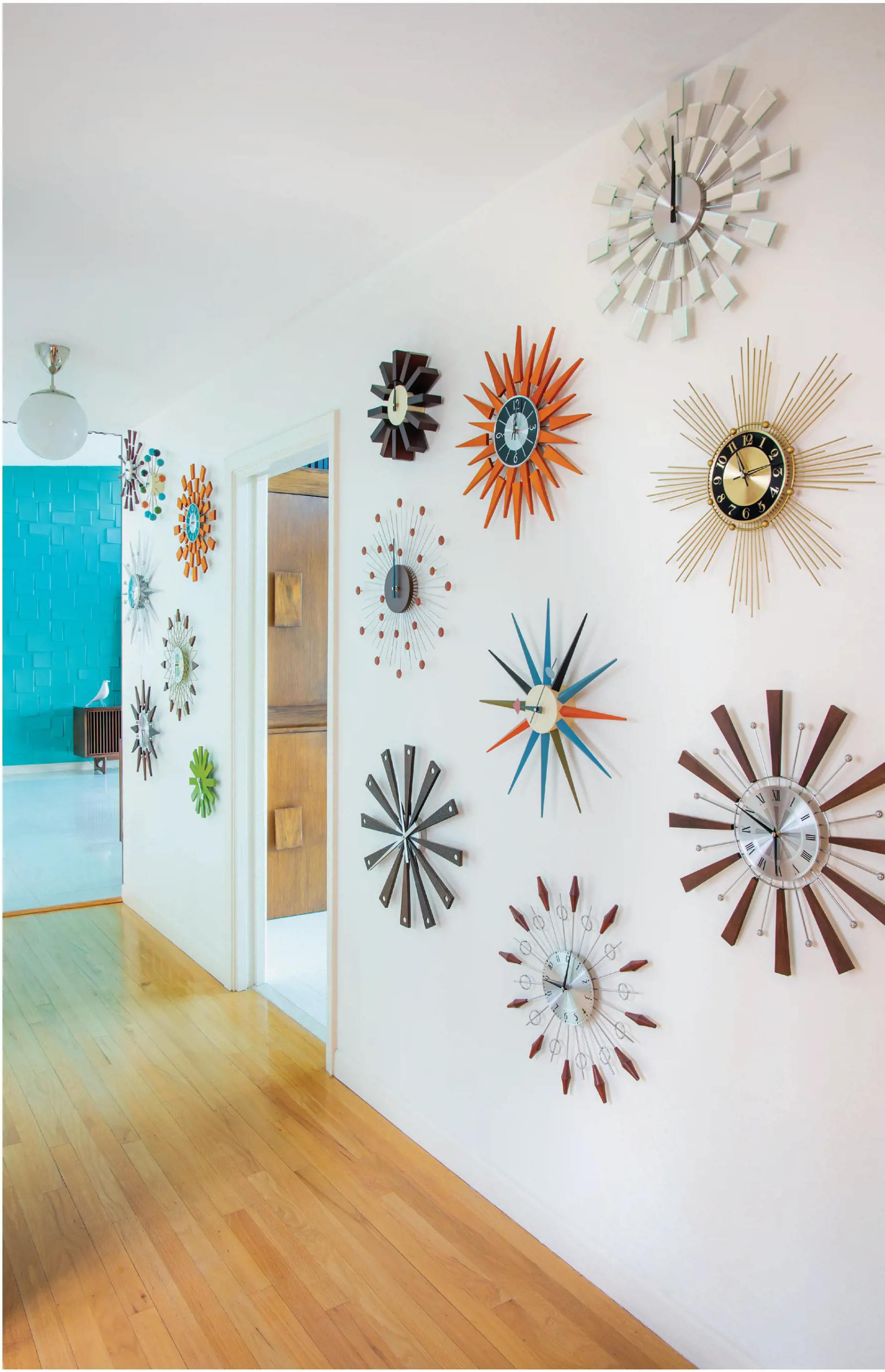
SEAMLESS SPLENDOR

The home's construction stylishly sports the predominant principle of MCM architecture: the seamless blending of interior and exterior spaces. "Surrounded by floor-to-ceiling glass panes totaling over 150 windows, one feels as if living in a fishbowl, with little to no boundaries from the inside and outside," Fabio says. "The main façade spans over 120 feet, allowing a visitor at the bottom of the left-skewed 30+ steps of stone curved stepway to the main entry to be engulfed by the splendor of the construction and the lights emanating from within."

“Atypically, the residence has three entrances facing south,” Fabio points out. “The main door is located atop the stairway and it is of the period, with a large curved beveled window contrasting the bright orange paint commonly used in the era. A custom-made, wood-framed checkered screen overlays the door. The second door is entirely glass and gives access through the driveway. Finally, the back door, most used by us, is of wood construction and highlighted by the same contrasting orange paint and custom-made screen. All doors are adorned with antique, period-appropriate brass hardware and skeleton key holes. Above the living room, a roof dormer protrudes to allow an abundance of natural light into the area. Moreover, a single stack, large chimenea emanates from the center of the roof to allow ventilation for a triple-faced fireplace that embellishes a large, open-space living room. Fenestration encompasses floor-to-ceiling half-inch panes that run along the front parlor, guest bedroom and master bedroom, casement windows, stained glass and fixed windows, totaling approximately 80% of wall space, creating an area filled with organic light and exterior views of the surrounding nature.”

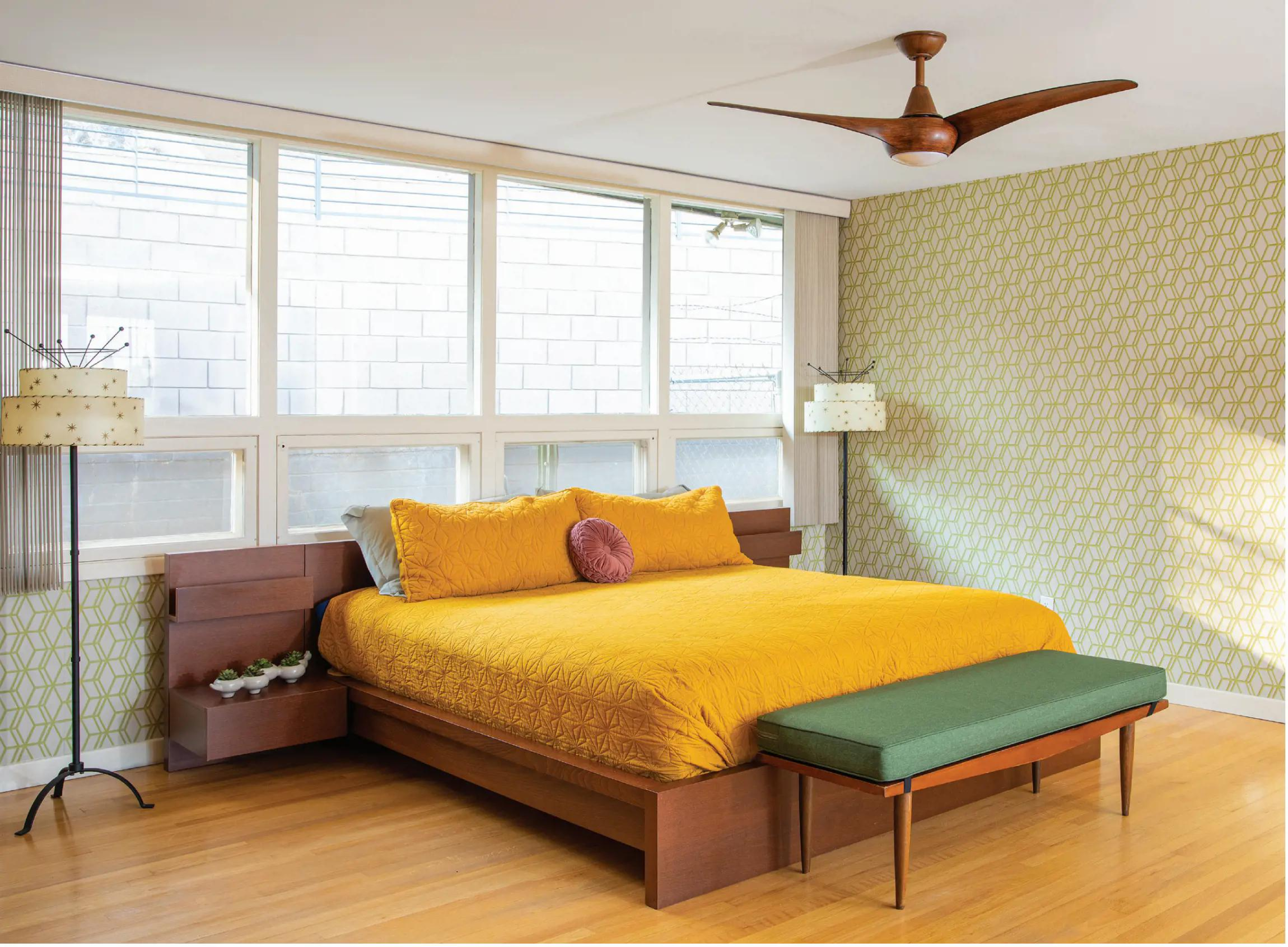
BLENDING COLORS & STYLES

Caren, a retired Orange County correctional officer, knew the color selection would be a key factor in creating the ambience she envisioned for her home. “I wanted our home’s color palette to feel warm and inviting but also bright and colorful at the same time,” she says. “I chose to stick to brighter Mid Century Modern colors in the main living areas while opting for softer colors in the bedrooms. The goal was to create a balanced cohesive look that feels both retro and modern, blending nostalgia with a fresh contemporary feel.”



above left: A second living room sports an unusual blue accent wall with texture. Caren found the tiles online at Home Depot many years ago (she says they are available now on Amazon) that can be cut as needed. The sofa is a reproduction of an Adrian Pearsall style.

right: This hallway features several Atomic-style wall clocks and original hardwood flooring.

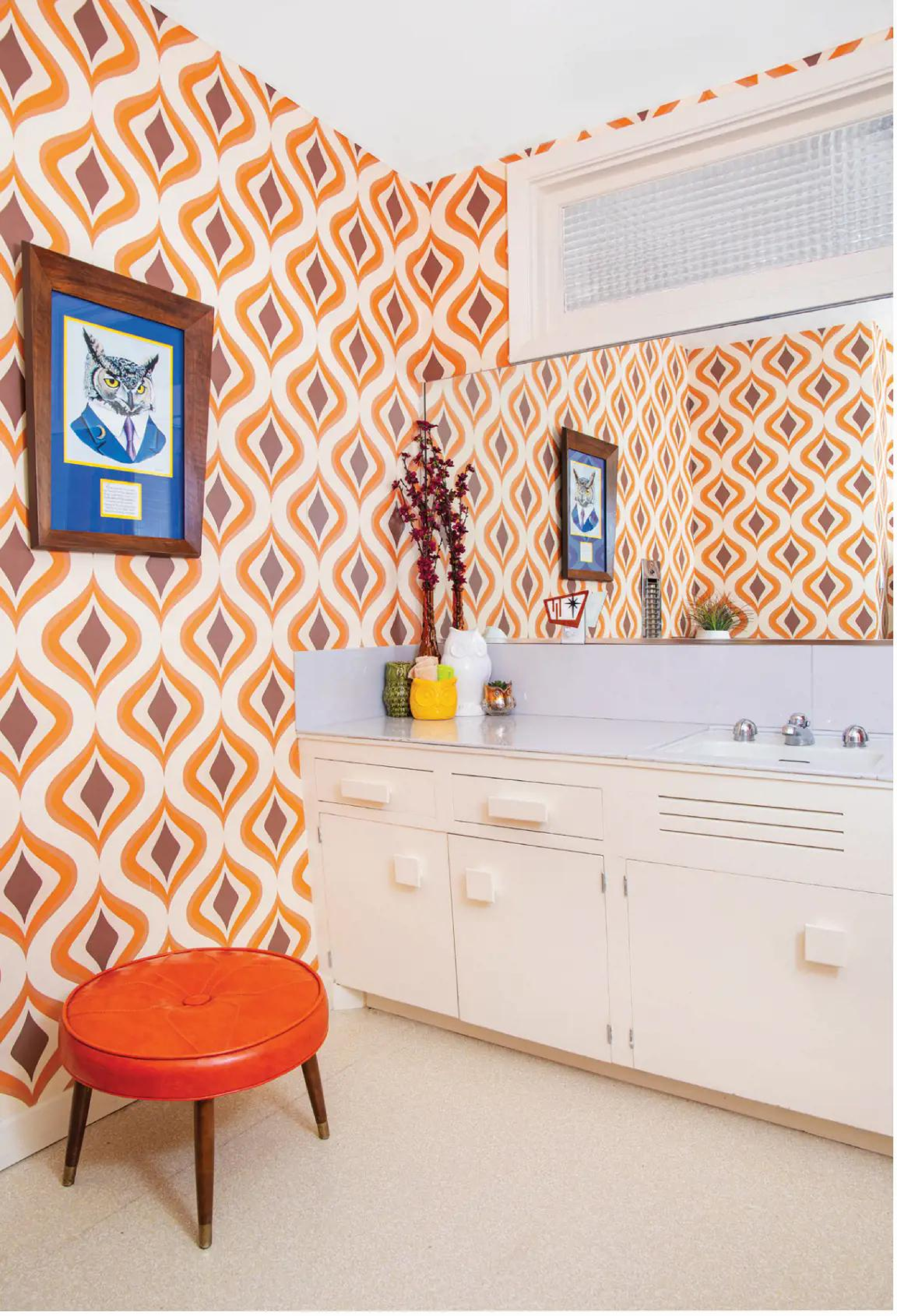


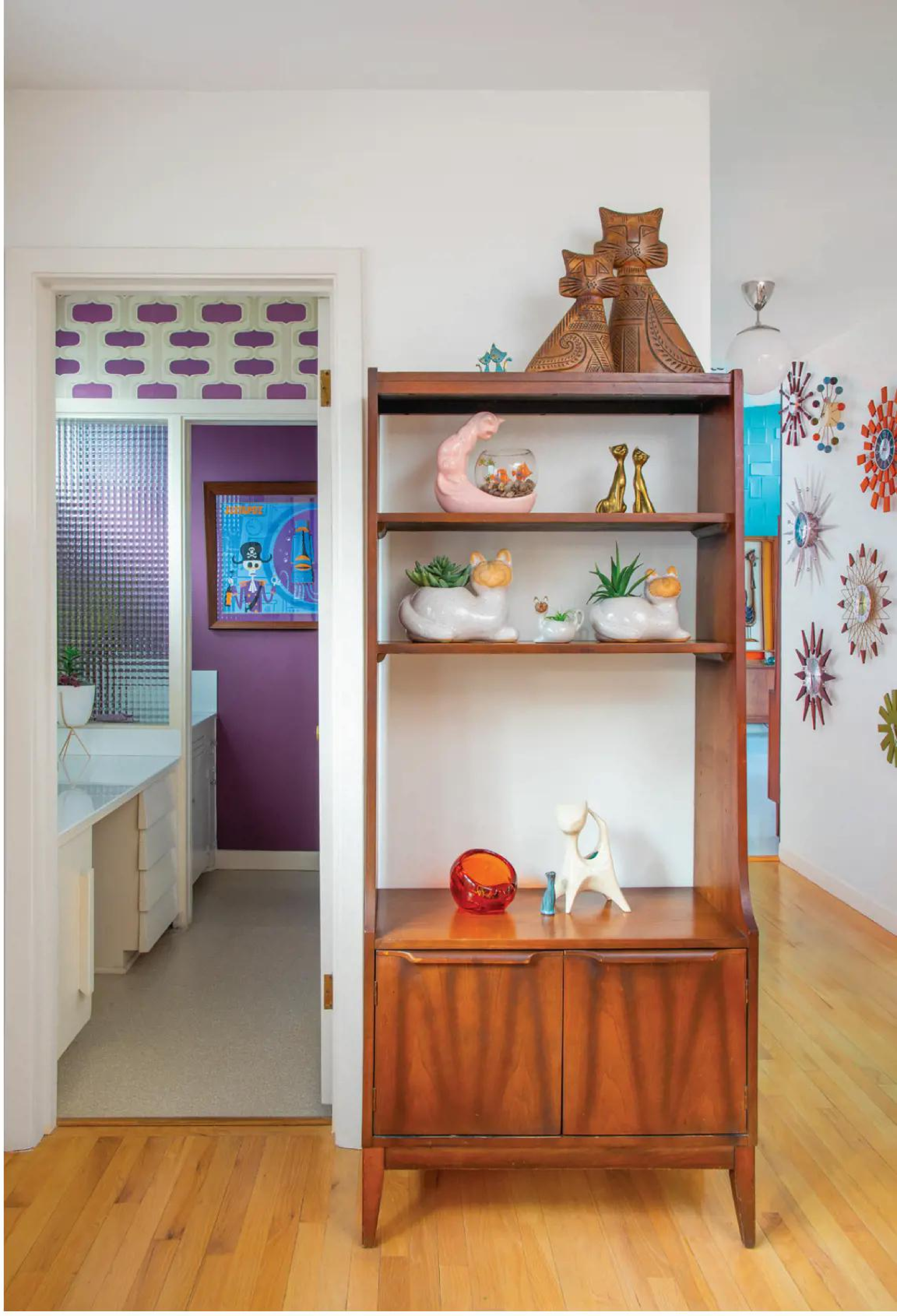
above: Caren loves the primary bedroom's vintage lampshade that has a small Starburst pattern. The wallpaper is from Graham & Brown. The Ikea bed is a reproduction of a vintage bed with a floating nightstand. Caren purchased the nightstand separately online because Ikea no longer sold it with the bed. The bench at the foot of the bed was an antiques shop find. Caren had the cushion custom made for the slated bench so her pets could jump on it safely to get on the bed.
left: The primary bath tiles are original to the home. The faucets and sink were made by Crane Drexel.

Along those lines, Caren channeled certain feelings when designing each space in the their home. "We wanted very different experiences in each area of the house," she explains. "Entering the Chi-Chi Lounge, one might be transported to the Enchanted Tiki Room at Disneyland and reminisce about their childhood or recall their latest Hawaiian vacation as they sip a tropical drink and listen to the beats of Los Straitjackets." In what the couple call The Mainliner Room, it's the nostalgia of the golden era of air travel, when United Airlines first started traveling to Hawaii and the optimism of the space race to the moon. In the adjacent living room, it was all about the Rat Pack vibes, sipping on an Old Fashioned while listening to 'My Way' on the vintage RCA Victrola console.

A STAR IS BORN

Not only have Caren and Fabio created the home of their mid-century dreams, but it has received accolades from the area's historical association and national media as well. "The house has recently been added to





above left: The Owl bathroom's wallpaper is a vintage style from Graham & Brown, as is all the wallpaper in the home. Caren found the vintage MCM footstool at a Goodwill. **above right:** This view from the back door entry to the foyer shows "The Cat Cabinet" that showcases cat figurines and planters. Caren found the hutch at an antiques shop. The purple bathroom features textured glass with a vanity and a pocket door for the restroom. The home boasts six pocket doors.

the Riverside Historical Association ranks as landmark number # 148 'The Paul A. Lewis Residence,' but we call it 'The Hollywood House of Riverside' because that's how the locals in the neighborhood referred to it when we first moved here, given the mid-century aspects and similarity to those homes found in the Hollywood Hills in California," the couple says. It even has its own Instagram account that you can follow: @thehollywoodhouseofriverside.

The Chi-Chi Lounge has been featured in the book*: Polynesiacs–Tiki at Home*, which spotlights home tiki bars throughout the United States.

The house, specifically the Chi-Chi Lounge, will also be featured on an upcoming documentary, "Cabali: A Tiki Mug Obsession," in which Caren will be interviewed about her tiki mug collection.

RIGHT AT HOME

"For 12 years now, we have been building our dream home. It's hard to pinpoint what part of your dream you love the most, but I love the Chi-Chi Lounge," Caren says. "Most of my friends are also into collecting tikis. I enjoy entertaining there and spending time admiring and rearranging my collection. If you ask Fabio, he will probably say the backyard we just built. It is a huge open space where he can do the things he loves (barbecue), all while taking in the stunning views of downtown Riverside."

When asked how their home makes them feel, Caren and Fabio sound as excited as the day they first met it. "Home is where the heart is!" they say. "Walking through the doors, we feel like we are surrounded by 70+ years of history. Some of the artifacts we have are indeed even older. Yet, it all feels so right and so modern. That's the beauty of Mid Century Modern architecture: It's a timeless style that ties interior and exteriors designs in one single, pretty bow. So, we feel a bit like a happy kid on Christmas Day unwrapping a beautiful present."

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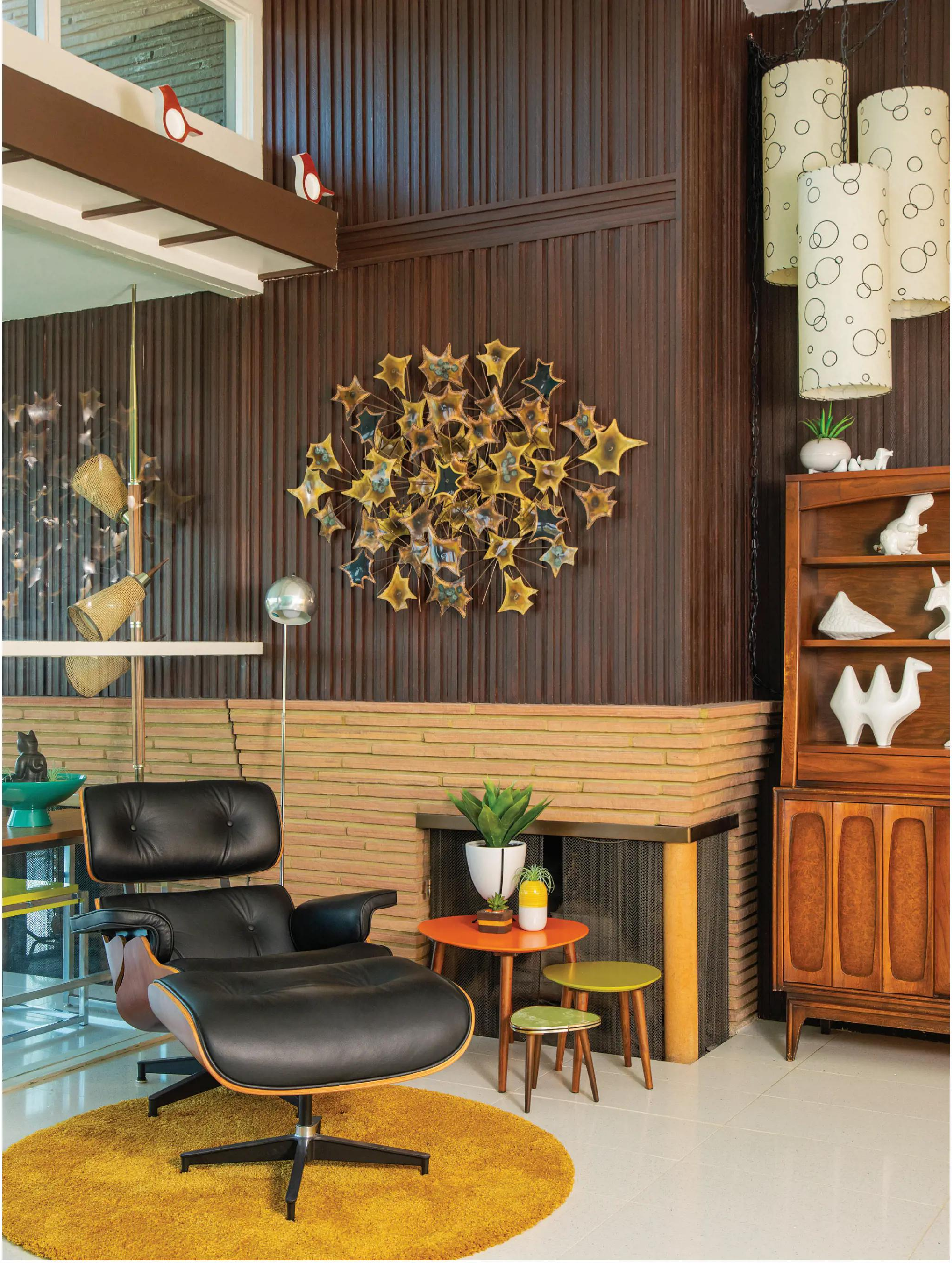


This reading area in the living room spotlights an Eames chair. Fabio loves to read and study for his job here because the light from the windows filters in throughout the day. The orange table and larger green table are from Jonathan Adler. The smaller green chair was an antiques mall find. The figurines in the cabinet are also Jonathan Adler and the dinosaur figurine is by Brett Kern. The metal art above the fireplace was a thrift-store bargain at only $5.

TALKING TIKI

Caren discusses the decorative collection that complements her MCM styling.

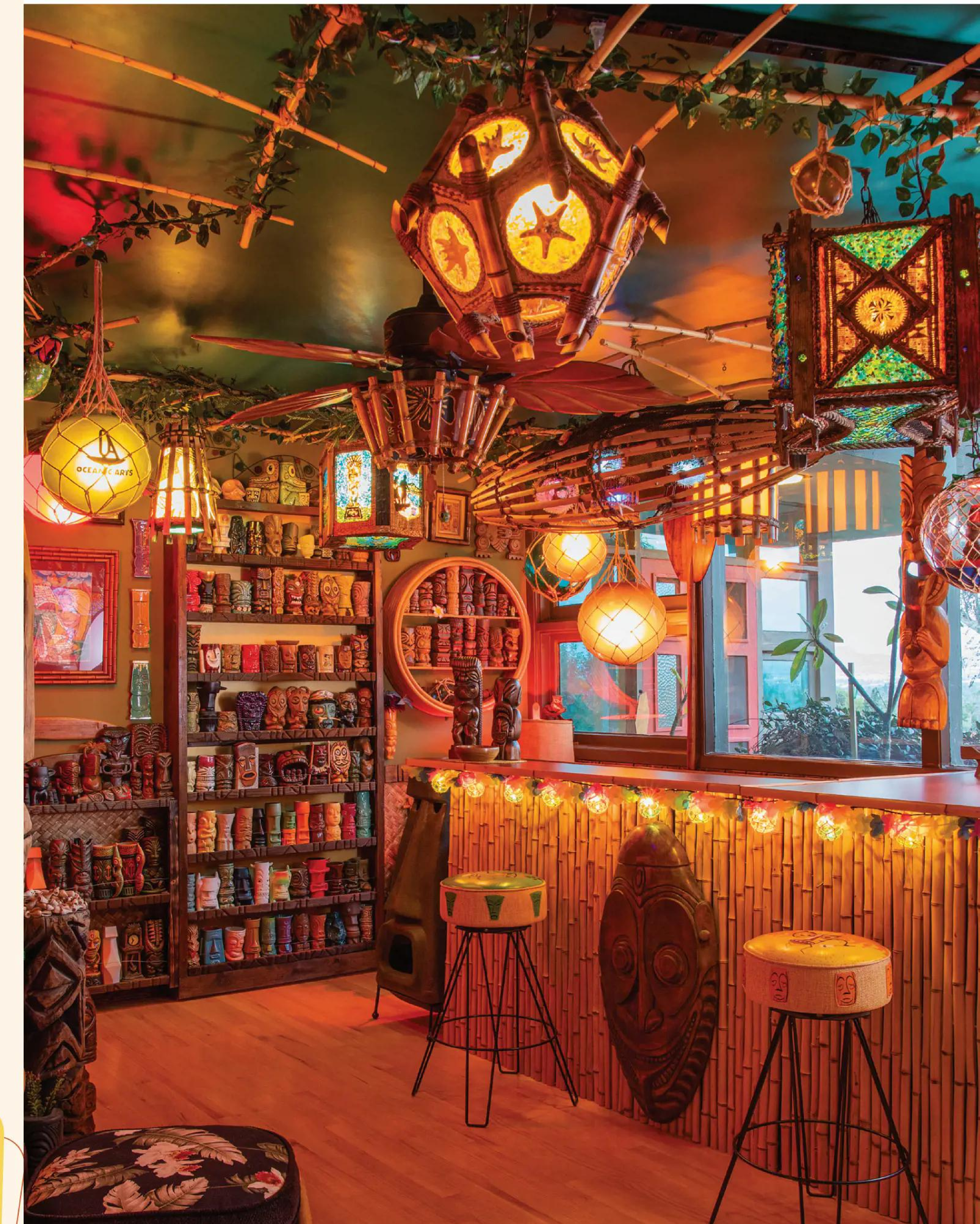
I started collecting tiki almost 30 years ago. When it came time to create a space, we were still residing in Upland. We had our friend, tiki designer Bosko, come over and give us some ideas. The space we had in that house was over 500 square feet, so when we moved here to Riverside, we needed to shed over two-thirds to make the collection fit in this 144-square-foot room. Using the same design ideas we had at our previous place, we transplanted the tiki room, and it's been growing ever since. The mugs are strategically displayed in shelves that were hand-built by Fabio. We add dimension to the space by layering our tiki lamp collection. And, of course, the centerpiece of the room is the tiki bar that Fabio and I built together out of an old kitchen cabinet we acquired from Craigslist decades ago.

Some of the tiki-god statues have recently migrated to the Mainliner Room, mostly by design, as the only ones who were freed from the Chi-Chi Lounge were the ones that belonged to United Airlines travel agencies during the height of the island travel inception.

Want to start your own tiki collection? Here are some of Caren's favorite makers:

Mugs:
@minitikimeow
@oddrodney
@tikipop

Lamps:
@madeyesforbiddenreef
@lanaitikidecor
@tiki_js



BOISE BEAUTY

This mid mod gem shines with several preserved original features, a fun retro palette and thoughtful updates.

By **Laura Shimko** • Photography by **Bret Gum**

WHEN RYAN AND LAUREN BURKE DECIDED TO MOVE TO BOISE, IDAHO, to embrace outdoor living, they were pleasantly surprised to find an abundance of mid-century homes in the area. “We are both fans of Mid Century Modern architecture and had collected mid-century furniture for years in our new construction homes in Chicago,” Ryan says. They knew exactly what they wanted, so they enlisted the help of TJ Pierce of Mid-Century Homes by Anthology (@boisemidcenturyhomes) to find a new home.

“We moved to Boise to spend more time camping and hiking, and split time between our Boise home and living and working a few months of the year out of our Airstream traveling the West,” Ryan and Lauren explain. With effort and a little luck, they finally discovered the perfect fit.

The carport is original to the home—and is the feature that sold Ryan and Lauren on the house. “It is how we originally fell in love with the home,” they say. “We worked with Rob Baker at Modern Mailbox, a Boise company, to match the yellow on the mailbox to the front door.”

FINDING HOME

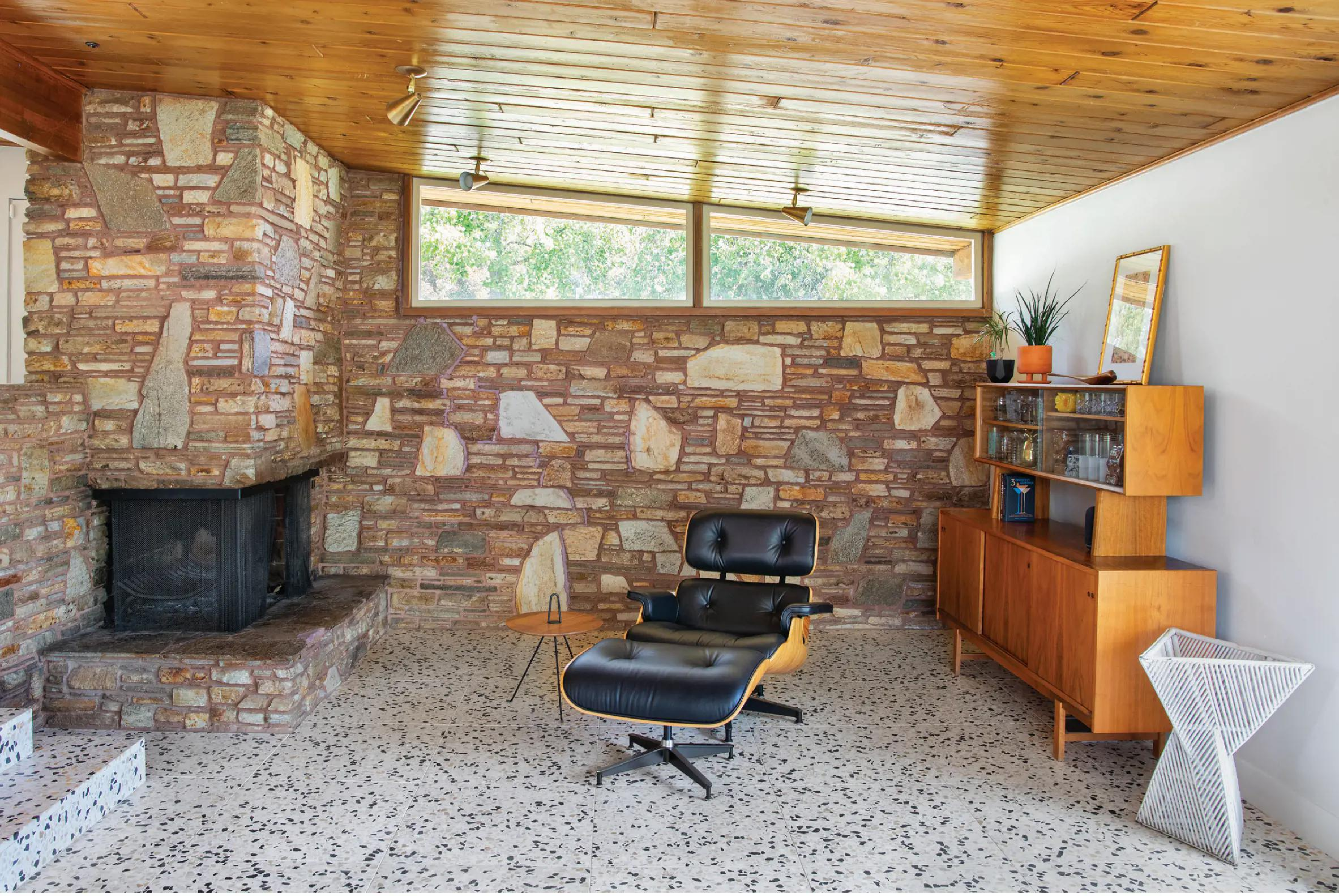
As longtime lovers of all things mid-century, the couple jumped at the possibility of realizing a lifelong dream. “Once we had seen the amazing homes Boise Mid-Century Homes were highlighting on social media, we knew this might be our one shot at owning a mid-century gem and began our search,” they recall.

With their wish list in hand—a sloped roofline, classic fireplace, lots of windows and a carport—they began the hunt. “We had driven all around Boise on scouting visits, writing down the addresses of the homes that fit these criteria and we hoped would become available,” they say. They came upon a 1961 build: 2,236 square feet with three bedrooms and 2.5 baths. Not only did it have lots of windows to allow natural light to stream in, but it also had an intact original fireplace, carport and iconic sloped roof. In addition, the home has incredible views of the Owyhee Mountains and has access to the Boise Foothill trails they love to hike. “We were so lucky to find all those features in our home,” they say.

Frank Sinatra - Dean Martin - Sammy Davis, Jr.
ROBIN AND THE 7 HOODS
Bing Crosby

“WE TRY TO COLLECT PIECES SLOWLY AND ALWAYS FOCUS ON SCALE FIRST. WE ALWAYS TRY TO FIND VINTAGE FIRST AND BUY NEW AFTER WE’VE GIVEN UP THE HUNT FOR A PIECE.”

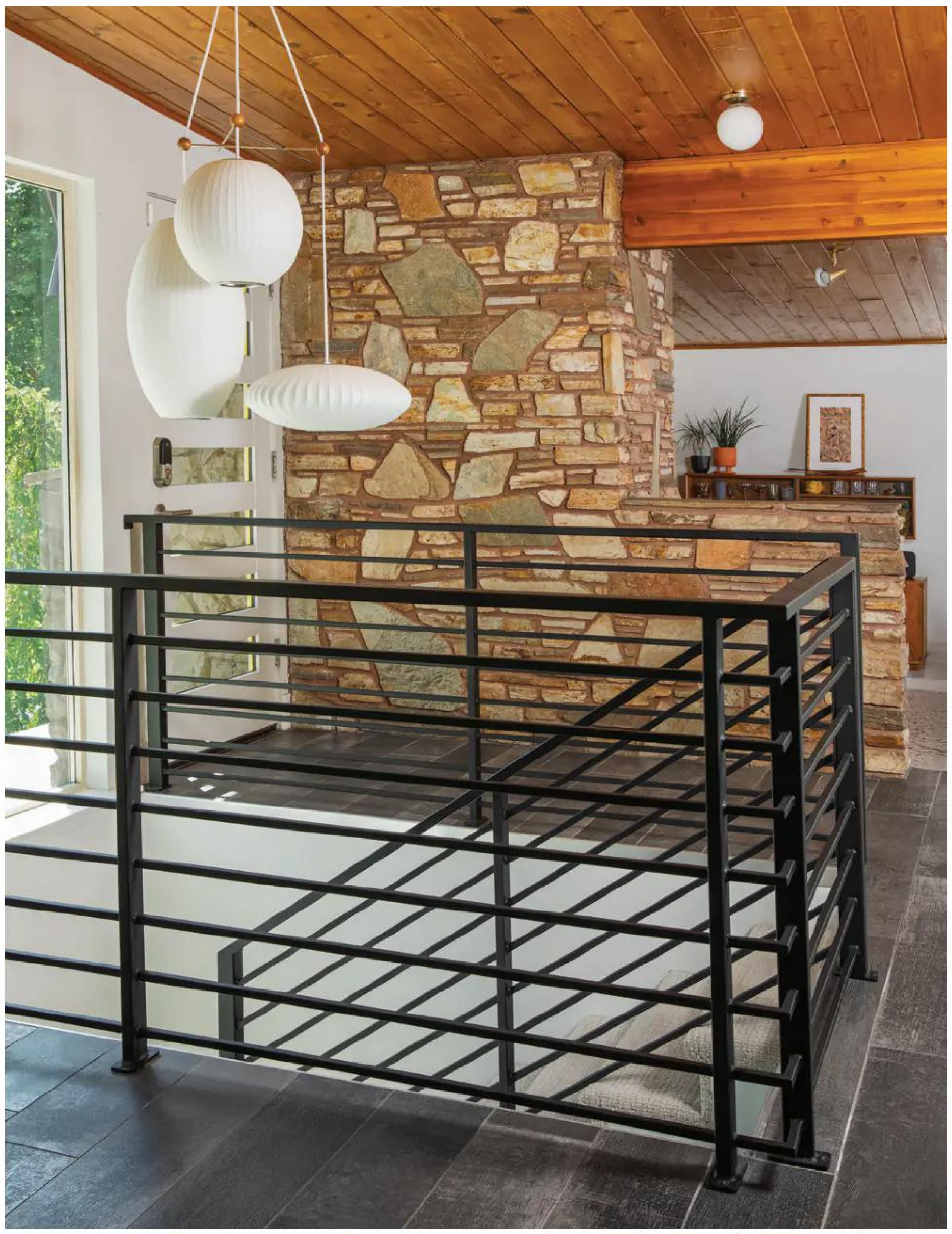
above: Their renovation work brought the mid mod living room of their dreams to life. “A modern take on terrazzo flooring, a collection of furniture we’ve slowly built in our 15-year relationship, and custom wood paneling and a media console to match the original vintage ceiling,” the homeowners explain.
right: Old meets new in the dining room, where Ryan and Lauren and the design team worked to incorporate newer pieces with a vintage look and feel. “It makes up for the functional but aesthetically lacking flipped kitchen,” they say.



RESPECTFUL UPDATES

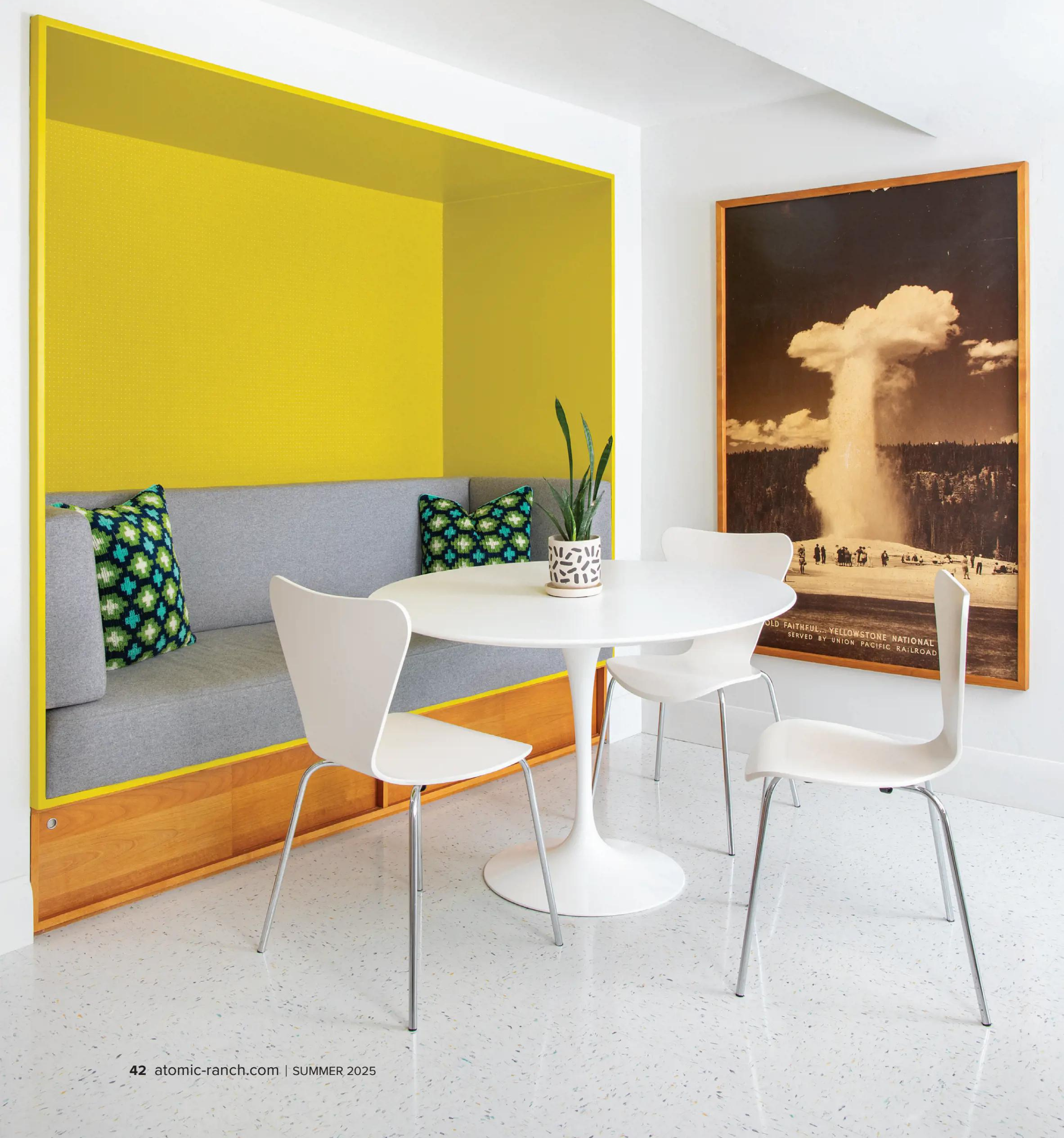
Since the home's inception, it had only belonged to one family. As the decades passed, the home began to show signs of significant wear and tear. When the family finally sold to a home flipper, the house received a complete redo to bring it up to modern standards. "But many original features were luckily preserved: the exposed brick fireplace, the wooden ceilings in their original stain and the carport details," Ryan and Lauren say.

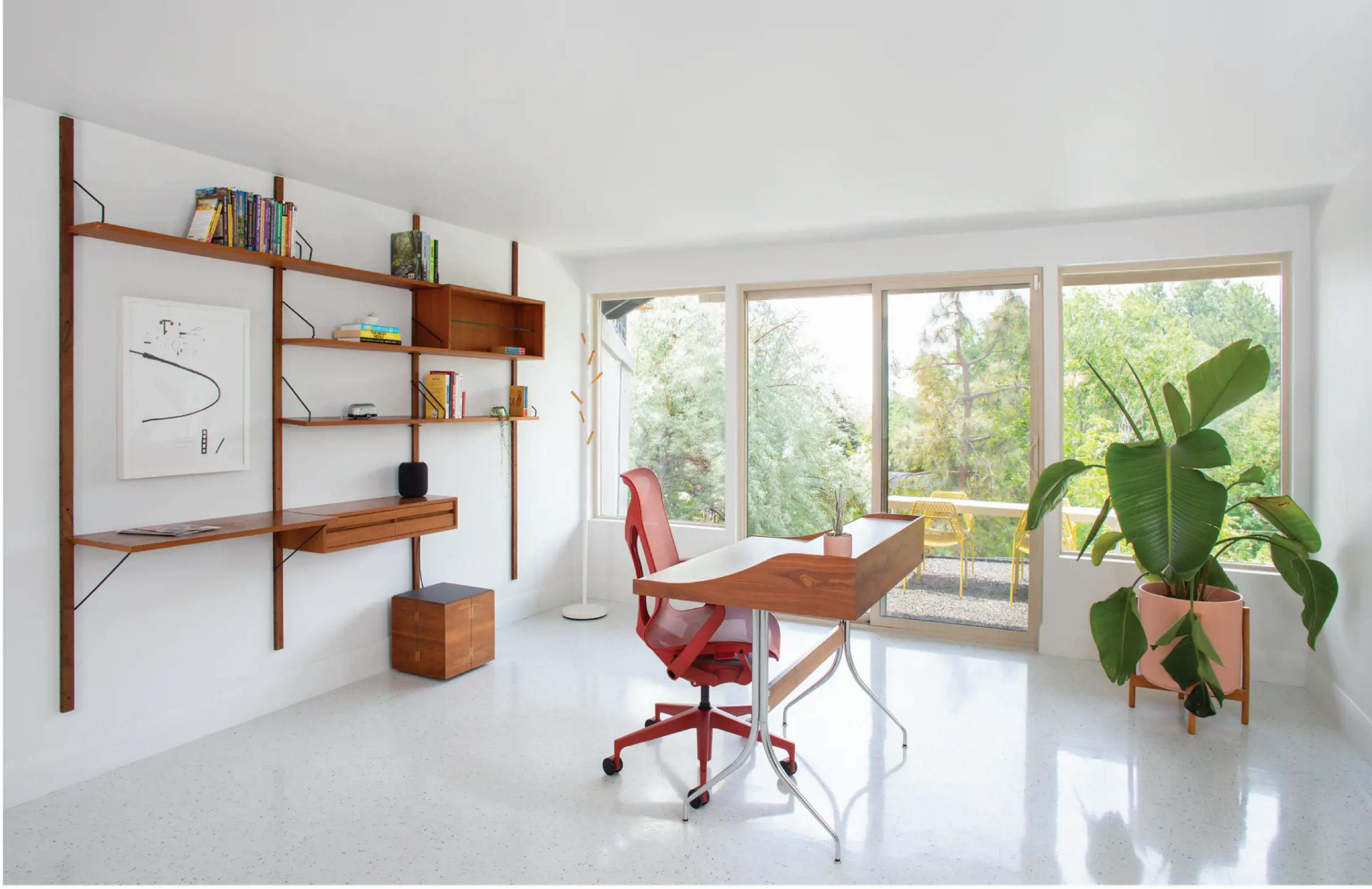
With a desire to preserve and enhance what remained of the home's original features, they hired Jessica Luque of Stussi Luque Design, Ty Howard of Howard Built, and Ogata Construction for renovation work. "We wanted to add back more period-appropriate character," they say. Their renovation included revamping the living room, lower level and guest suite. They made sure to utilize materials that honored the mid-century vibe, like terrazzo floors in the living room and VCT flooring on the lower level.



While many key original features were preserved, some were lost in the flip. Here, the original railings were replaced by the home flippers. "We hung the Nelson lamps to give the classic mid-century look where the original details were replaced," the couple say.

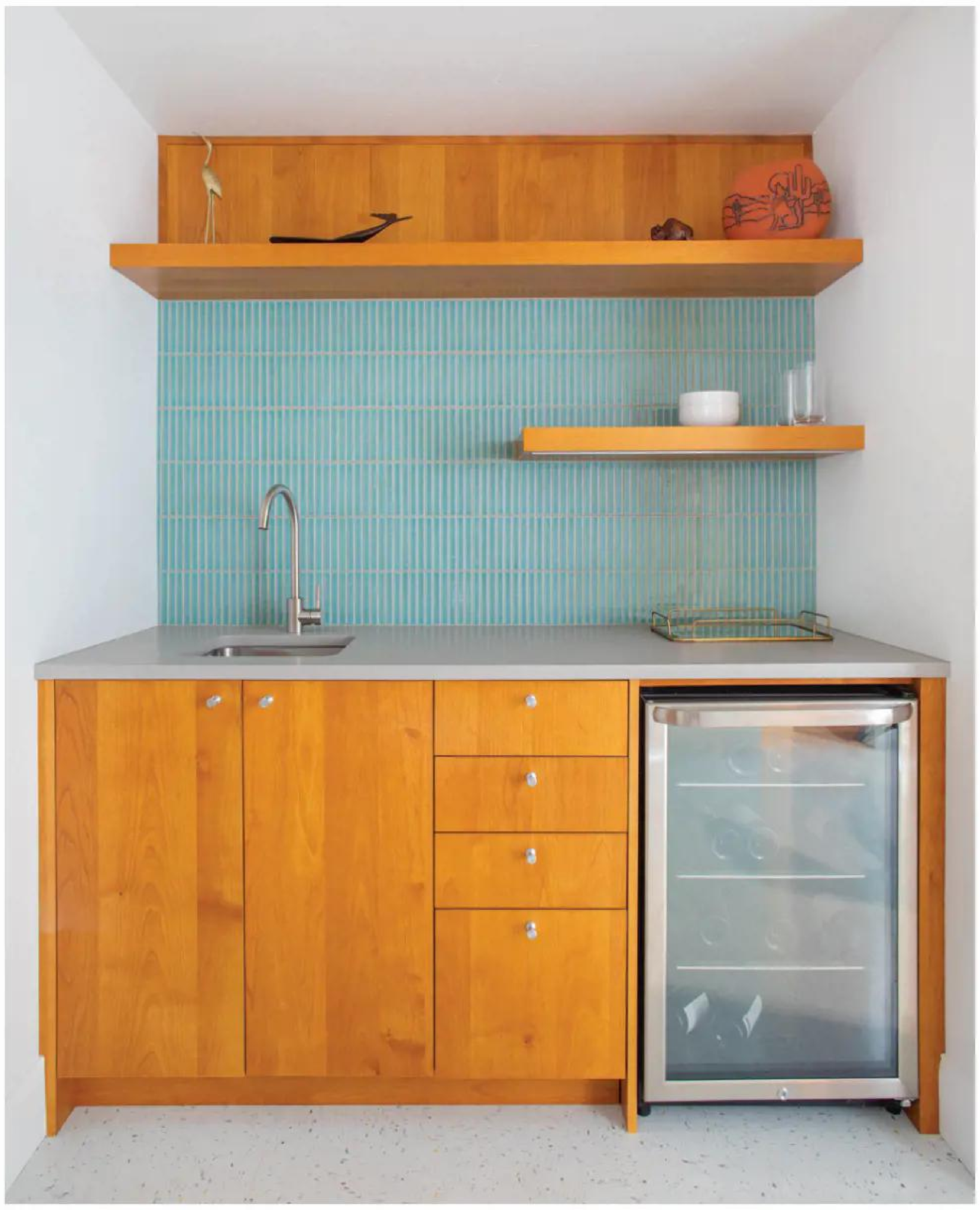
In the lower-level living space, VCT flooring ties to the terrazzo floors on the first level. The team encountered a challenge when working the design. “This space has HVAC running near the ceiling. Our designer, Jessica, had the brilliant idea to take the awkward HVAC run and install a custom banquette below it, fixing the utilitarian awkwardness of the original space,” Ryan and Lauren explain. The vintage Yellowstone print from Dial M for Modern has a custom frame build by Ty Howard of Howard Built and the stain matches the cabinetry nearby.


OLD FAITHFUL.. YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL
SERVED BY UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD



above: The wall of windows floods the space with generous amounts of natural light and a lovely view of the natural surroundings outside. “We both work remotely from home and wanted to create a minimalist but vintage-inspired office space on the lower level,” Ryan and Lauren explain.

below: The couple replaced the kitchenette on the lower level to better accommodate when their families visit. “We stock the fridge with local Idaho favorites and breakfast items before each stay,” they homeowners say. The bold blue tile continues the bright and cheerful theme.



MOD STYLING

Finding the balance between old and new can be tricky when renovating a mid mod home. Ryan and Lauren worked with the teams they hired to create a design that stuck to the home’s roots while also reflecting their own unique style. “We wanted a modern, minimalist take on mid-century design with pops of color through our furniture,” they say. “While our space is minimal, we try to bring in bold accents.” A neutral backdrop serves as the perfect canvas for their vast collection of vintage pieces to shine.

Placing their furniture is like art: it takes time, thought and adjustment to get it just right. “We want everything in the room to feel like the perfect size and maintain flow throughout the space,” they say. Adding to their collection is likewise the result of careful consideration. “We try to collect pieces slowly and always focus on scale first,” they say. “We always try to find vintage first and buy new after we’ve given up the hunt for a piece.”

A mixture of bold colors, original mid-century elements and personalized features make this house feel like home.

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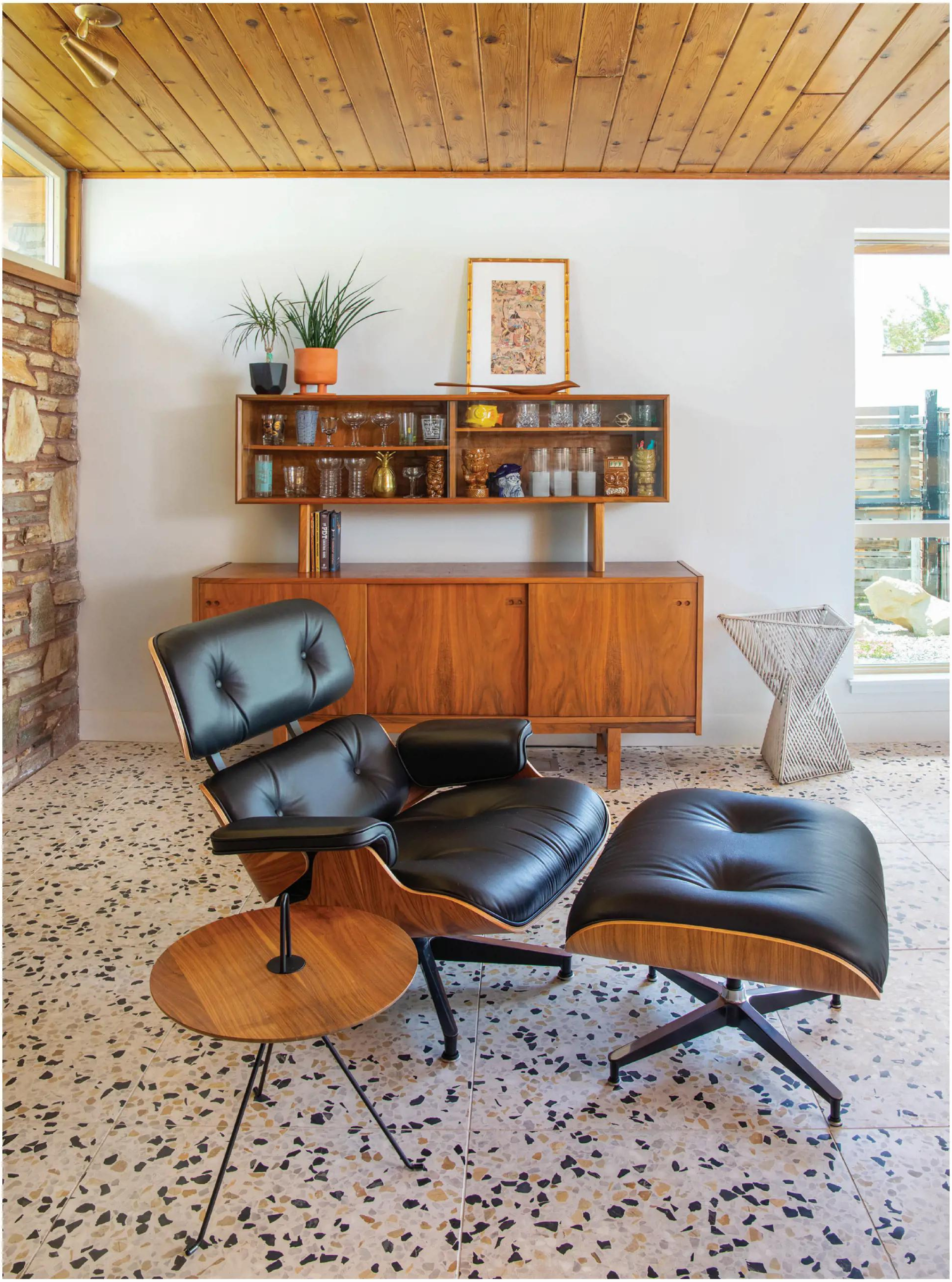
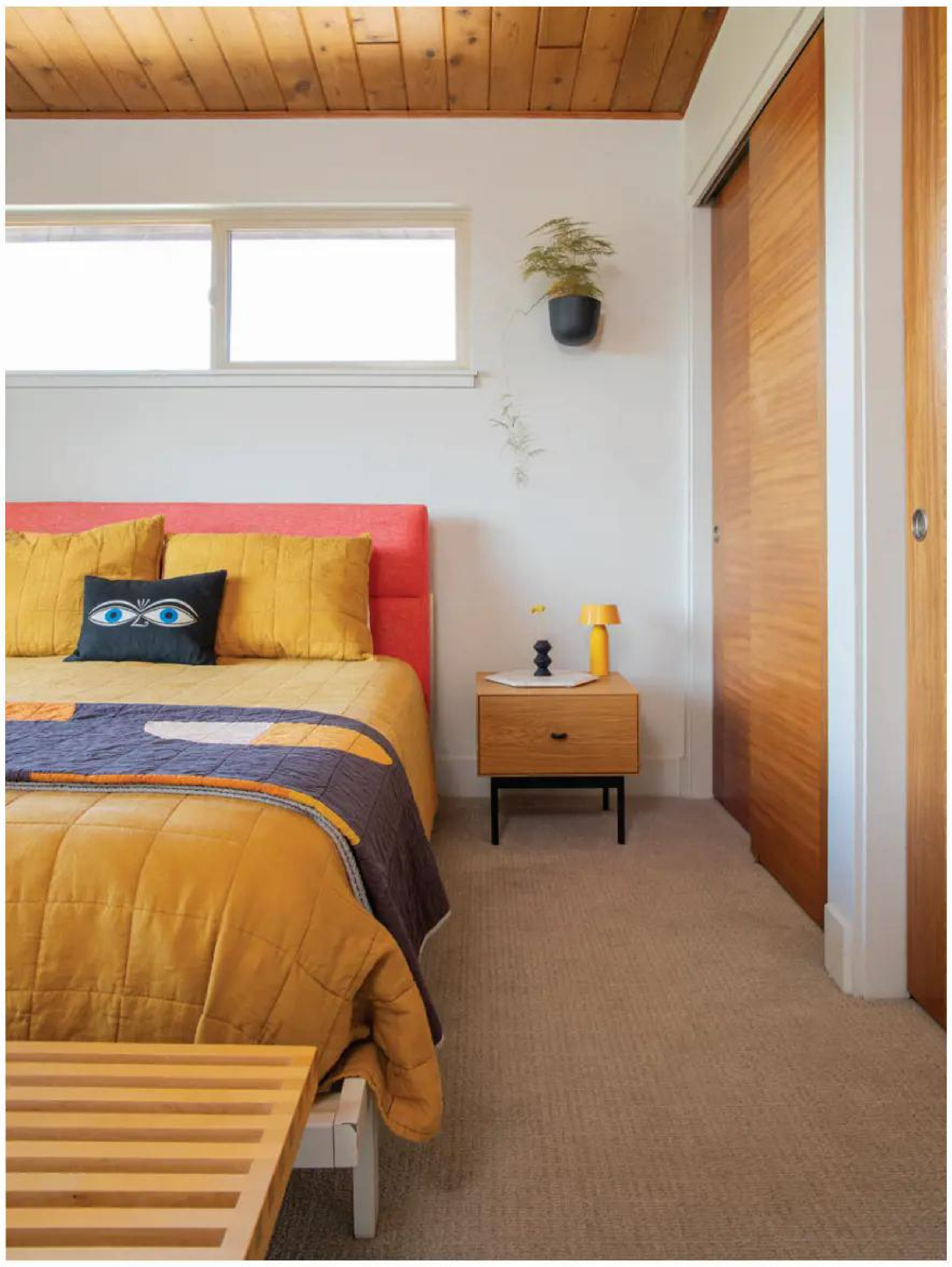
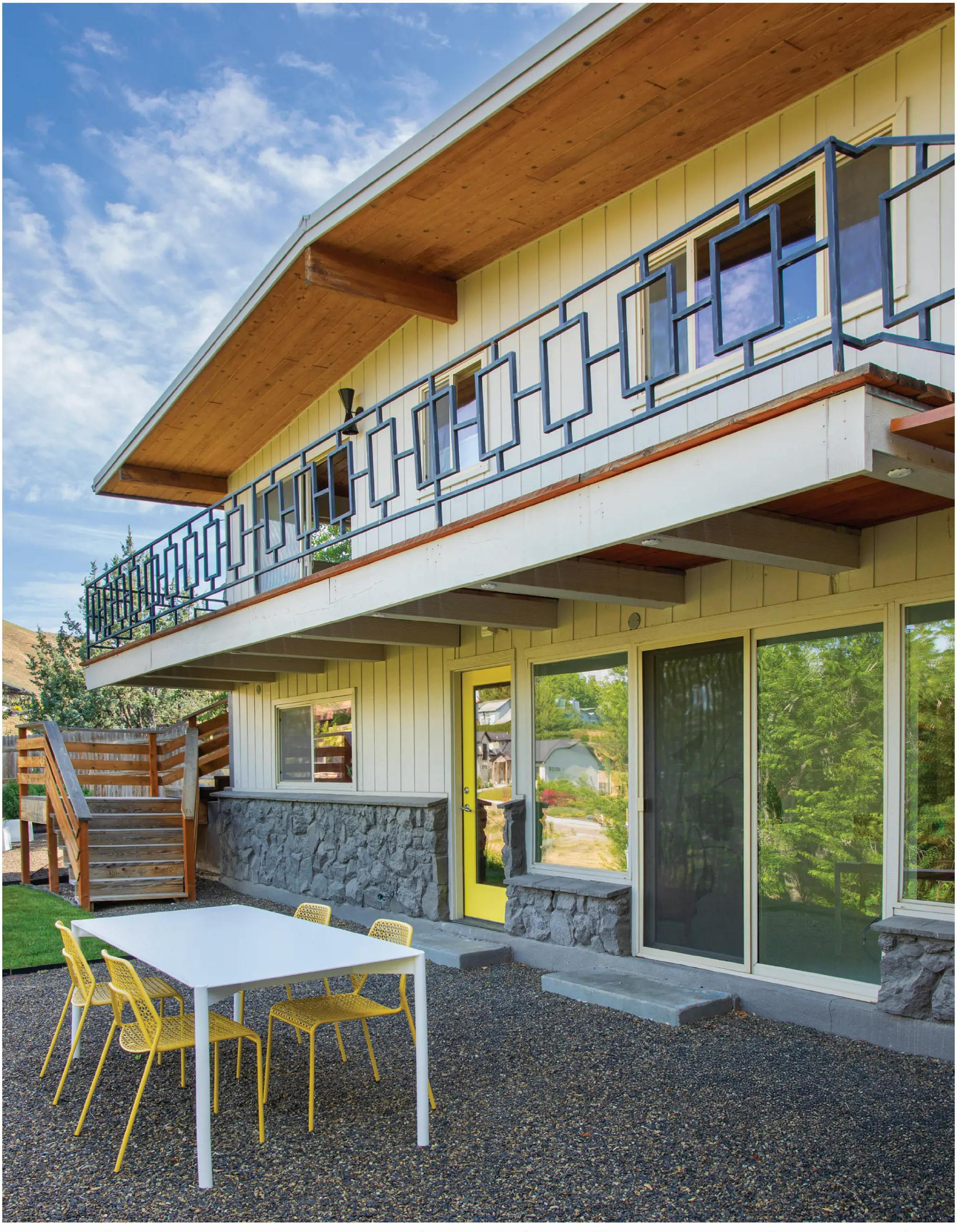


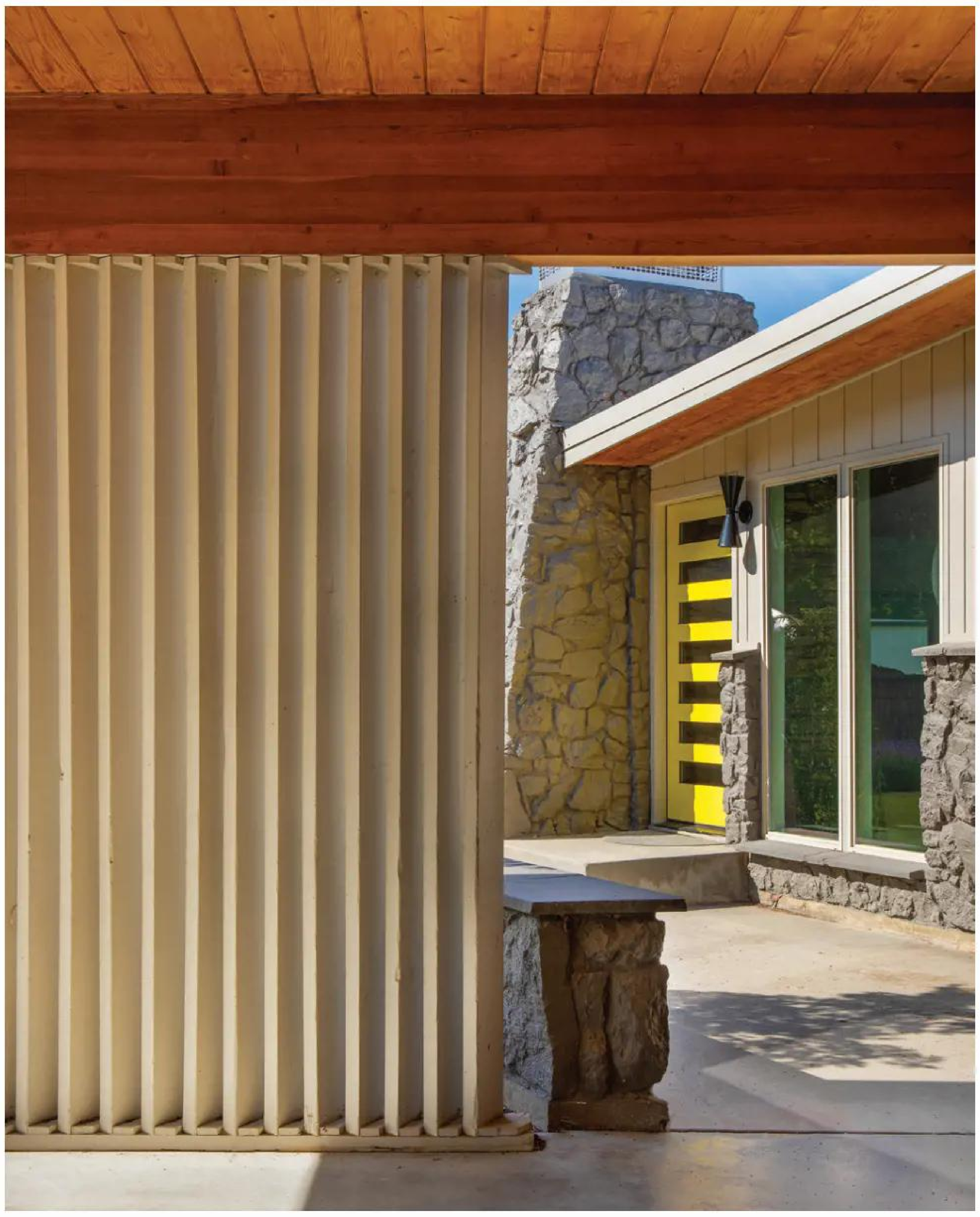
Ryan and Lauren's vintage furniture collection takes center stage in the living room. "We always dreamed of the Eames lounger and ottoman, and we finally had the perfect spot to add it next to the perfect vintage fireplace," they say. "The credenza is vintage and contains vintage finds from our time together."



top, left: In the primary bedroom, the small space is compensated by gorgeous views, courtesy of a large slider, of the Owyhee Mountains and Boise Foothill Trails. "Our guest room on the lower level has more vintage charm, but our smaller bedroom blends the indoors and outdoors beautifully," the couple say. **top, right:** In the guest bath, minimalist meets a splash of color. "It was brought to life with loud tiles and matching cabinets to the kitchenette right outside the door," Ryan and Lauren point out. **above:** The wall paneling here the guest room is an addition by Jessica Luque and Ty Howard. "It gives the room warmth and a mid-century feel that was previously lacking," Ryan and Lauren say. The furniture here is mostly vintage pieces from their collection, including the bed frame, chaise lounge, cube side table, light fixture and dresser.



Landscaping was another major project the homeowners undertook in their renovation. “We replaced the original paved back patio with stone to give it more of a Palm Springs look,” Ryan and Lauren say. “The back patio has a view of the Owyhee Mountains.”



top, right: Nestled on top of a vintage bomb shelter—a throwback to the "atomic" in *Atomic Ranch*—the back patio is the perfect outdoor living space. "Our back patio is an extension of our living room, and we wanted to take the mid-century styling out the door," the homeowners explain.

top, left: A glimpse of the couple's Airstream from the carport. "We had a project to install mid-century-inspired landscaping to the front and incorporated a space and landscaping for our Airstream," Ryan and Lauren say.

above: Personal touches make this exterior design meaningful in addition to the mid mod elements. "We wanted the house to scream mid-century from the front and painted the door a bright yellow, our wedding color, and purchased vintage bowtie sconces from Hip Haven," Ryan and Lauren say.

BOISE-STYLE MCM

Mid mod gems across the country bear their own regional twist. TJ Pierce of Mid-Century Homes by Anthology shares some insight into Boise's mid-century homes.

AR: About how many homes are there?
TJ: Boise's mid-century inventory is something special: There are just over 11,000 mid-century homes spread across some of the city's most distinctive neighborhoods.

AR: What is the price range?
TJ: They range from $500K to $1.5M.

AR: Where are the homes located?
TJ: You'll find notable concentrations in The Highlands, Warm Springs Mesa, Winstead Park, Cruzen Mountain View, Central Bench, Depot Bench, Franklin Park, Randolph Robertson and Hillcrest.

AR: What years were they built?
TJ: These neighborhoods, developed in the 1950s and '60s, are all within 5 to 15 minutes of each other, surrounding downtown Boise and the river that runs through our big little city. As the city grew, some of these areas took advantage of the natural elevation, offering incredible views: north to the snowcapped foothills or south over the city skyline.

AR: Which architects are represented?
TJ: The homes here reflect the work of some incredible architects, including Art Troutner, Charles Hummel, Nat Adams, Joe LaMarche, Jed Jones, Victor Hosford and Bradford Shaw—and, of course, Clarence Reinhardt, who even designed our new office for Mid-Century Homes.

AR: What makes Boise MCM unique?
TJ: One of the most notable features is the use of Oakley stone, quarried from Oakley, Idaho, which appears frequently in both exterior and interior designs. Another unique aspect of Boise's MCM history is the influence of Art Troutner, a local architect and innovator. Troutner used several residential projects, like the Phillips House, as experimental spaces for his Trust Joist manufacturing techniques. His innovations in engineered wood products eventually contributed to the creation of the Kibbie Dome at the University of Idaho—an impressive engineering accomplishment.

Looking for your own mid mod gem in the Boise area?
Reach out to Mid-Century Homes to make your dream home a reality: **mid-centuryhomes.com** or on Instagram **@boisemidcenturyhomes**.

GLASS PALACE IN PALOS VERDES

How a pair of MCM enthusiasts discovered and renovated the Richard Neutra-inspired home of their dreams.

By **Lauren Darcangelo** • Photography by **Roger Davies** • Build by **Primary Design Builders Inc.** Interior design consulting by **Midcentury Modern LA**

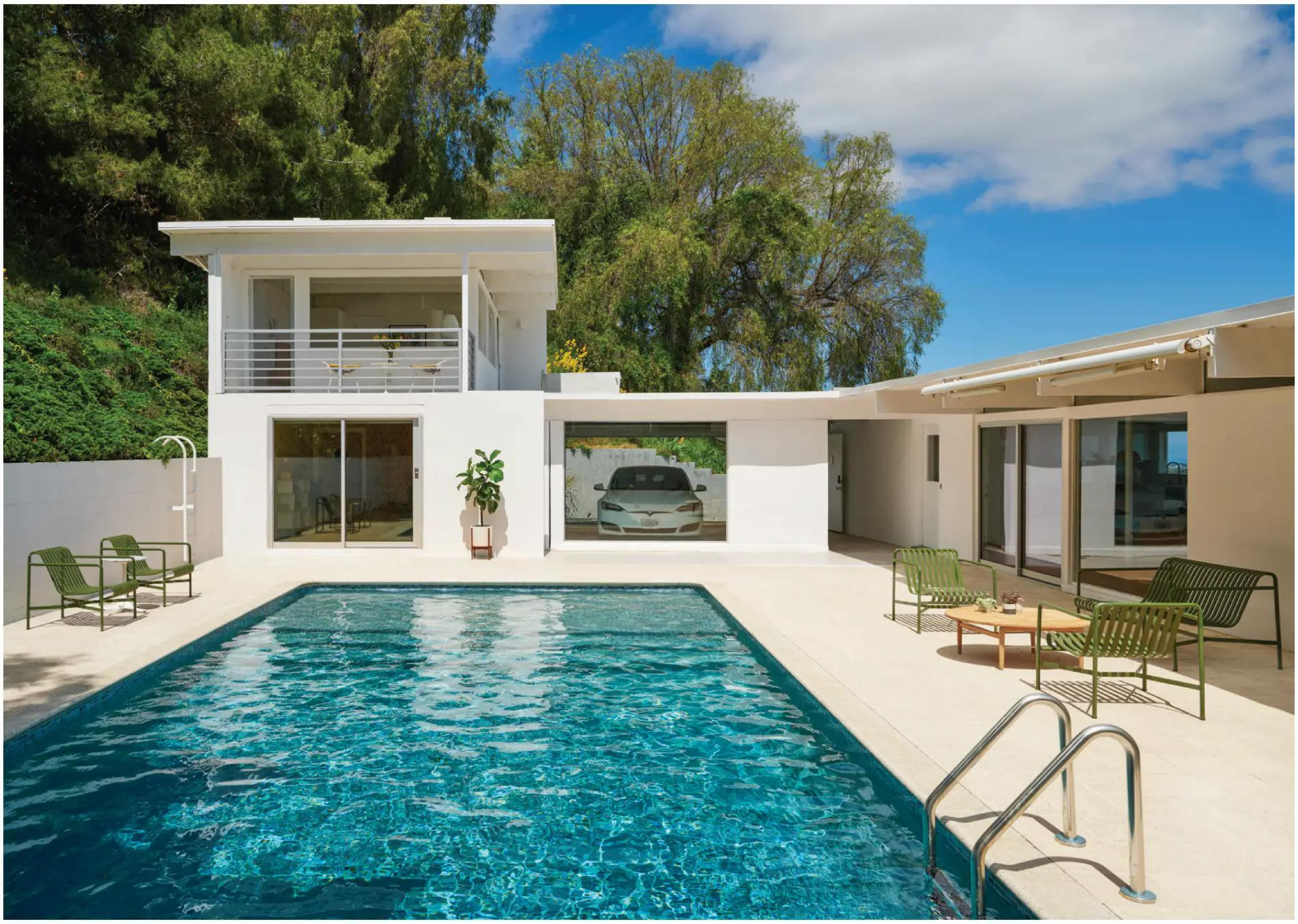
WIEN 1900
THE RADICAL EYE

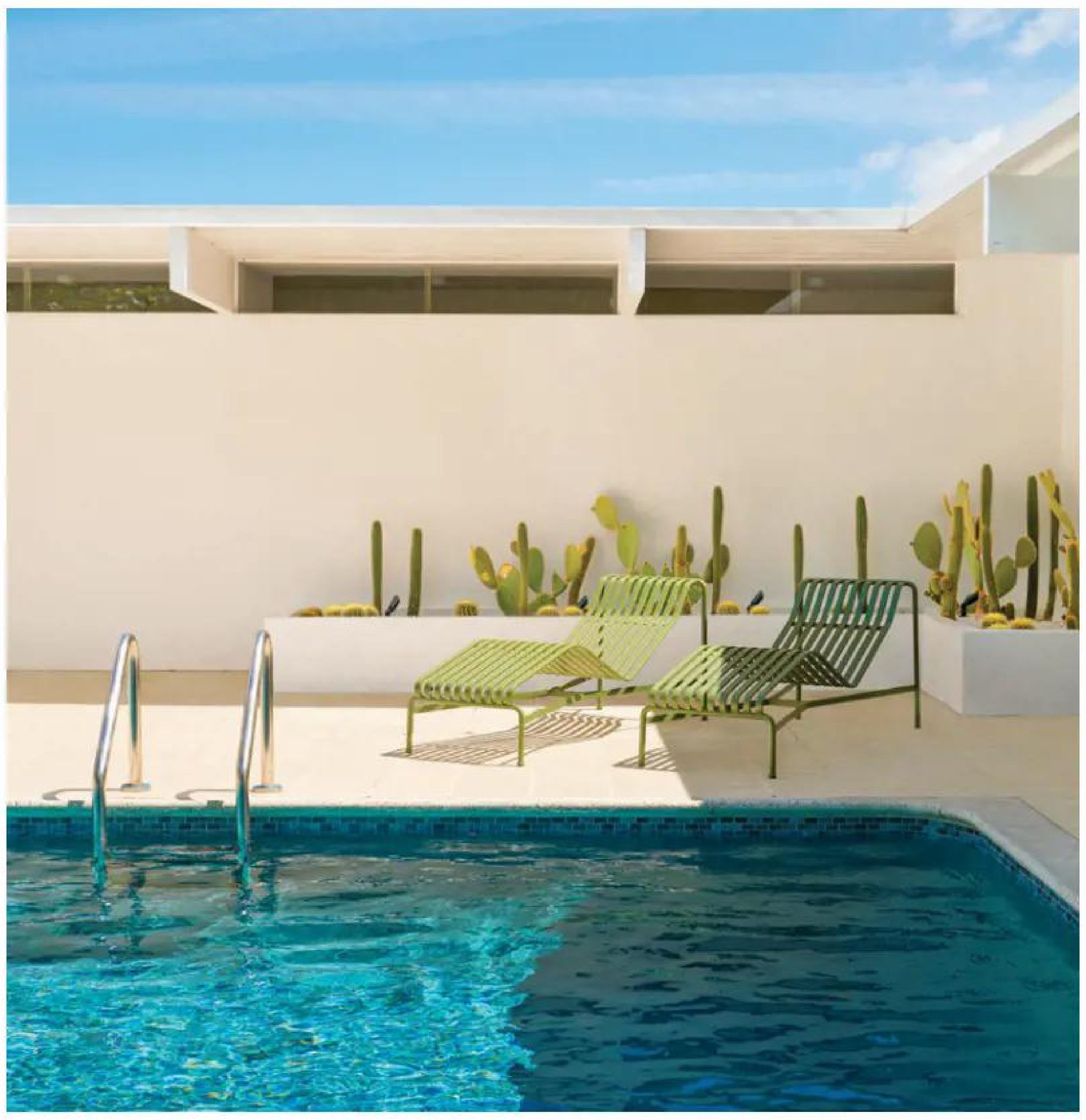
PERCHED PERFECTLY ON A PALOS VERDES, California, hillside, this 1961 home was a dream discovery for Justin and Nicole Rheem. “The moment we saw it, we fell in love,” Nicole recalls. The couple, both doctors and parents of two young children, had been searching for a Mid Century Modern home after falling in love with the style years earlier. “During the pandemic, with both of us being health care workers, we traveled to Palm Springs to have vacations out of the city because we couldn’t travel anywhere else,” Nicole says. It was the work of famed architect Richard Neutra there that captured their attention.

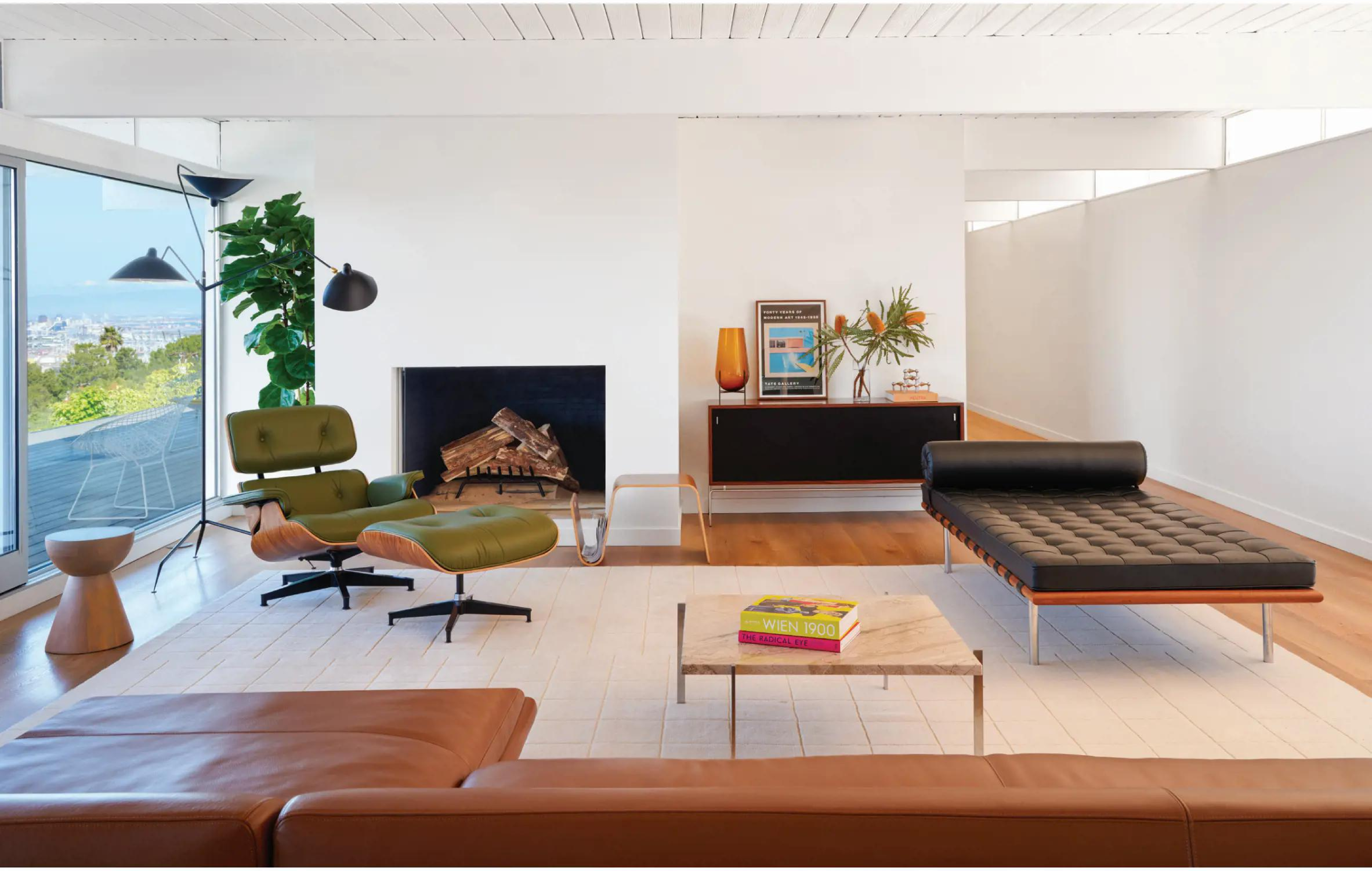
“ALL OUR FURNITURE—AND EVEN OUR HOUSE ITSELF—IS ALL ABOUT THE LINES. THERE ARE NO CURVES. IT’S JUST ABOUT THE LINES, THE HORIZON, THE SKY, THE POOL.”

below: Both the glass window to the garage and the two-story guesthouse adjacent to the pool are original features of the home. The pool, while originally 9 feet deep, is now 5 feet deep, with an extra shallow “kids play area” at the far end.

bottom, right: Even from the interior courtyard, you can see the stunning surrounding views. “The private pool courtyard offers a view through two walls of floor-to-ceiling glass windows,” Justin says.



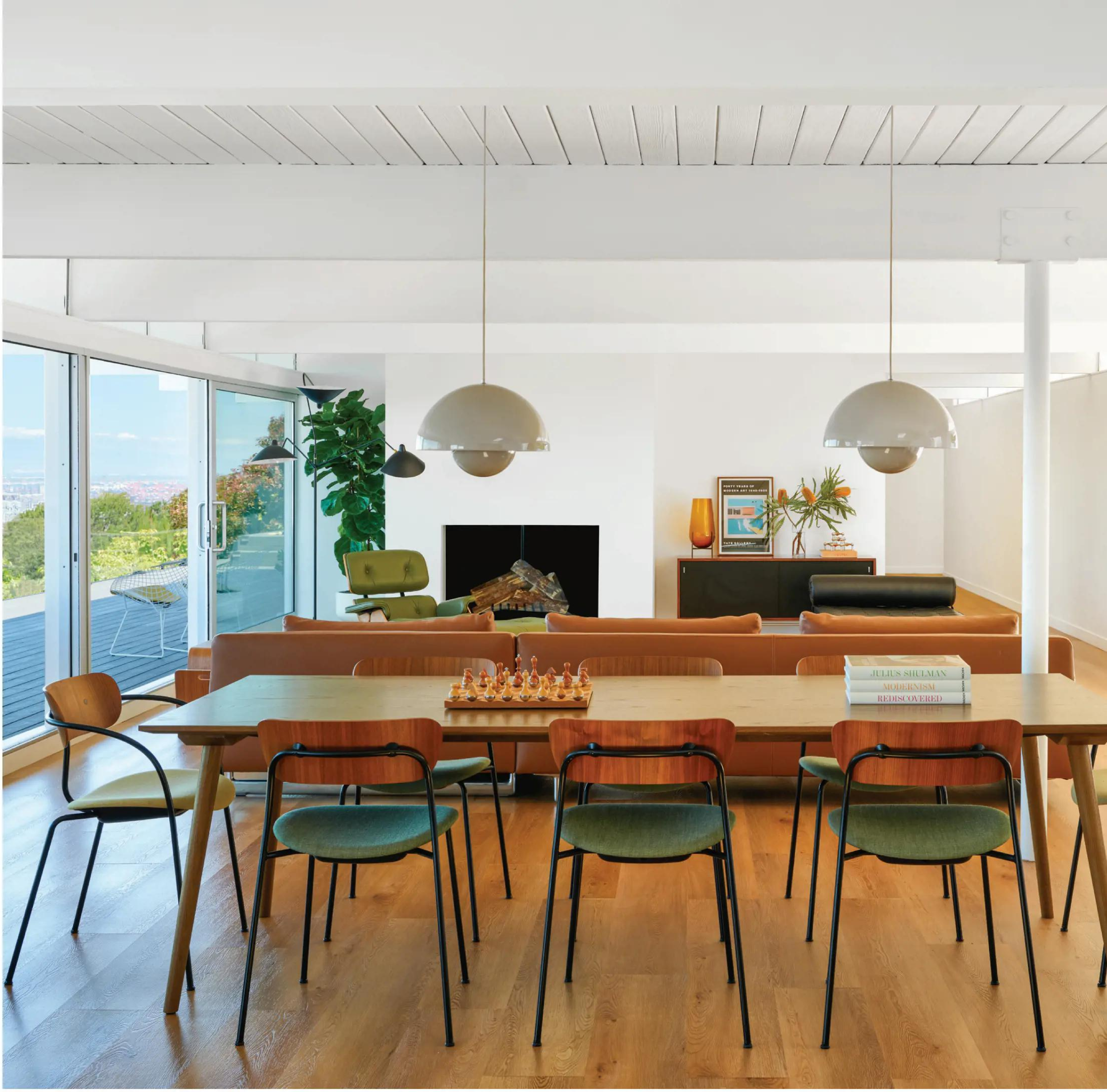




THE FLOOR-TO-CEILING GLASS WINDOWS OFFER SWEEPING VIEWS, FROM MALIBU TO LONG BEACH.

"This home had the typical Neutra-style architecture and features, even though it was very worn down," Nicole says. The house itself was designed by a lesser-known architect named Jacob Dakessian, a follower of Neutra, in 1961. According to a nearby neighbor who told them the story, the original owner of the home owned a tile company and had a knack for picking young, talented people to work for him. "Even though Jacob Dakessian was in his twenties, the former owner picked him out and asked him to build this home with a great price and the exact style that he wanted," Justin says.

For Justin and Nicole, it was the Neutra-inspired house of their dreams. "It was pretty outdated, but we immediately saw that we could update a few things so it would look like a gorgeous, brand new modern home," Nicole says. With four bedrooms and bathrooms in the main house, plus an additional two-story guest house, the entire structure is about 3,000 square feet.

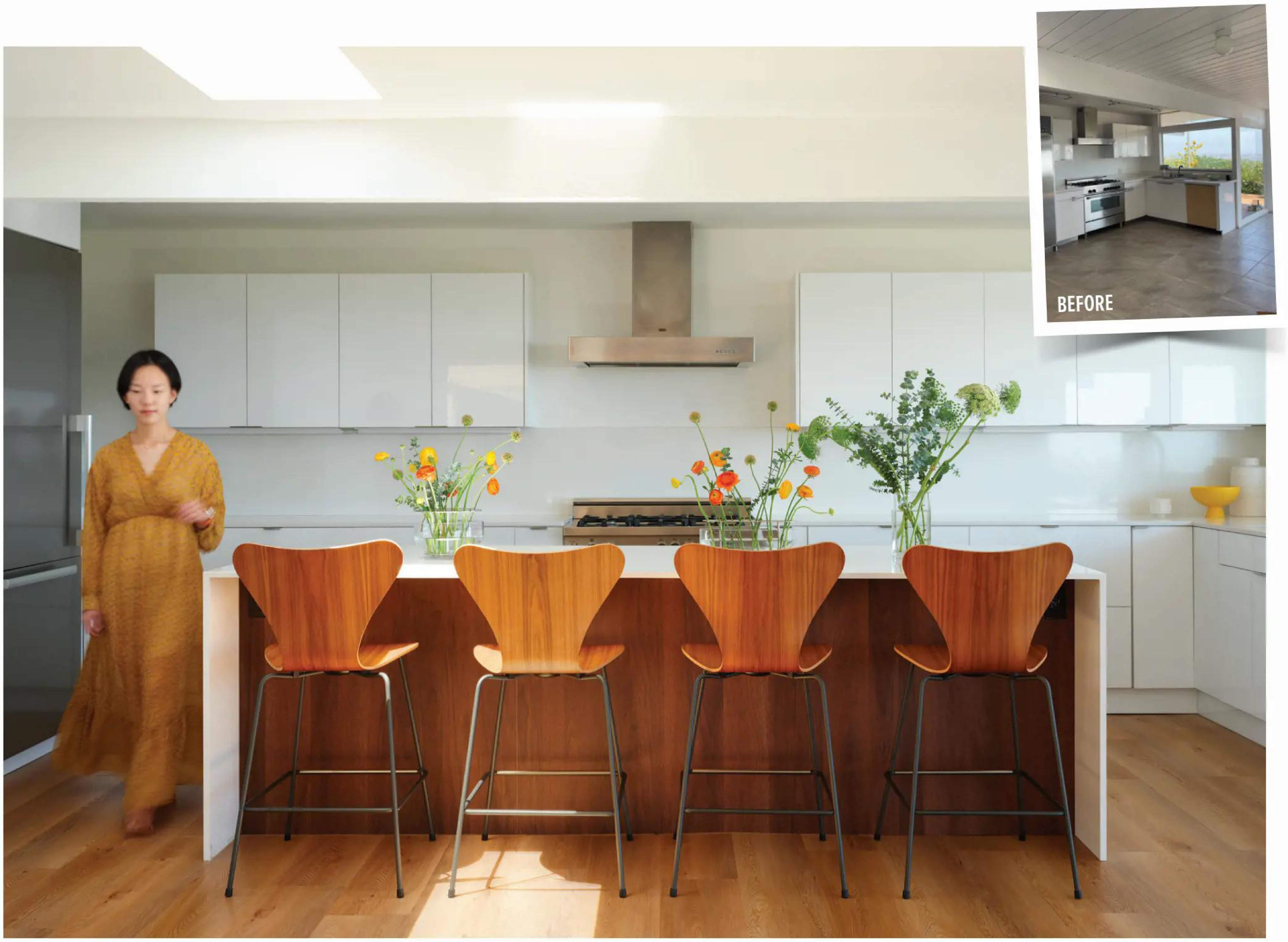


“We also have olive green dining chairs,” Nicole says, noting the couple’s desire to have both warm, natural colors reminiscent of the period and continuity in the space. The stainless steel legs of the Anderssen & Voll Pavilion chair reproductions are consistent with the other furniture in the space.

LINE OF SIGHT

Located in Southern Los Angeles, the home has floor-to-ceiling glass windows that boast views all the way from Malibu to Long Beach. “On clear days, you can even see the Hollywood sign,” Nicole points out. Windows on both sides of the home give even the interior courtyard the same stunning views. “You can imagine this house being a ‘C’ shape, and then inside the ‘C’ there’s a swimming pool, so even when you’re in the swimming pool with the kids you can look through the house and enjoy the view outside,” Justin says.

“The most important challenge when we first bought the house was the radiant heat controller,” Nicole says. “The problem was that the main controller was awkwardly located in the middle of the living room.” Since the system was so old, they went on a hunt for the original builders of the system. “After months of searching, we finally found Bob, who was in his eighties, and he was the one who actually built out the radiant heating floor,” Nicole says. Thankfully, he was still able to move the controller to another location.



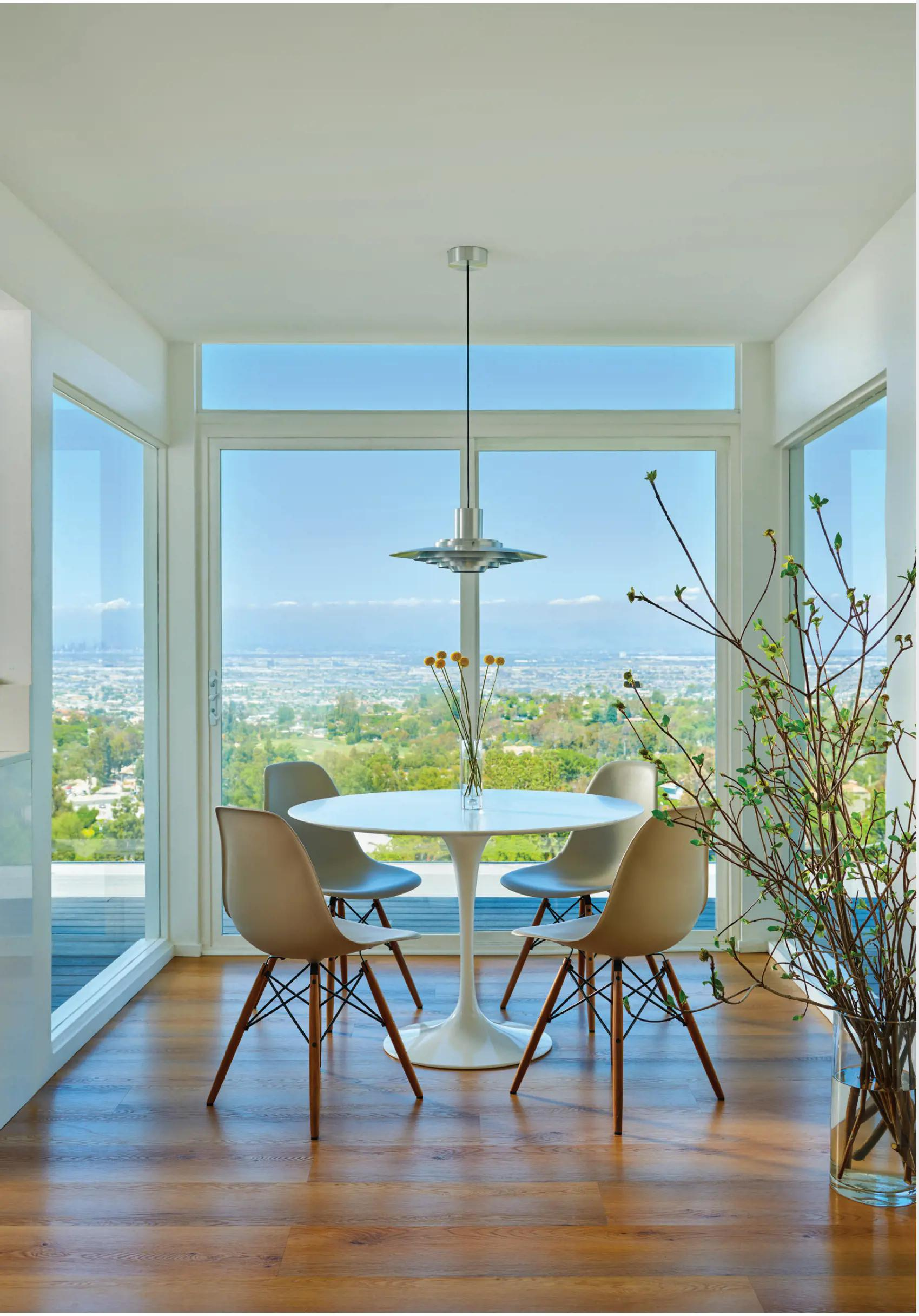
above: During the renovation, Justin and Nicole removed a wall that separated the dining area from the kitchen. "We wanted an open layout, and having young kids it was definitely beneficial to be able to see them while we're in the kitchen," Nicole says. They finished the symmetrical room by adding four Series 7 counter stools by Arne Jacobsen.

left: This hanging photograph of the LAX airport is a nod to both its close proximity and the Rheem family's love of travel. "We purposely put it there because in that direction is where LAX is," Justin says. "It's also a very iconic piece of mid-century architecture."

KEEPING IT CLASSIC

It was important to the couple that they capture the true essence of both mid-century architecture and interior design through the renovation. "We tried to preserve a lot of the Mid Century Modern features in this house, such as the sunken bathtub, the front glass garage, the floor-to-ceiling windows, the clerestories—all the original features that were meant for this house," Nicole says. The biggest changes included replacing the carpet with hardwood, extending the deck and removing a wall between the kitchen and dining room. "We wanted everything to be symmetrical," Nicole says. "All the centers of the space, the center of the kitchen, the dining room and the living room—they're all aligned."

This breakfast nook was an addition from a previous owner's remodel. With glass windows on three sides, it's almost as if you're outdoors. A Fabricius & Kastholm pendant light hangs above the table.



PURIST PRINCIPLES

While some mid-century home renovations end up being an eclectic mix of both 21st- and 20th-century design principles, the homeowners wanted to stick as close to the 1960s as possible. Here are three elements they used to make their vision come to fruition:

1. **Classic Pieces.** With the help of Eline Hissink, they selected reproduction furniture that captured the best of mid mod design. Stainless steel legs, natural wood and simple lines were some of the main features in pieces they chose. "It's all about simplicity, minimalism and the functionality of each piece," Nicole explains.

2. **Colors of the Era.** Nicole spent hours selecting accent pieces and colors for the house that were warm, natural and reminiscent of colors used at the time. Some examples include the yellow exterior wall and the olive green dining chairs.

3. **Clean Lines.** It was important to Justin and Nicole to let the lines of the house speak for themselves. "The view itself is artwork that's there; we didn't need to add a lot of things. Everything is about the lines," Nicole says.

RicHard AvEdoN
AVEDON AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

top, left: Nicole intentionally kept the primary bathroom pristine and white; it's one of her favorite rooms in the house. "That white tone and simple design really highlights the view," she says. The glass is even equipped with smart technology that can be turned on for privacy. "The bathroom tiles on the wall are horseshoe-shaped because Palos Verdes is known for horseback riding," Justin says.

left: The primary bedroom, like almost every room in the house, features more amazing views. "Every room has a sliding door that goes to the deck," Nicole points out.

“WE KEPT IT REALLY MINIMALISTIC, TRYING TO ACCENTUATE THE NATURE AND THE SURROUNDING LANDSCAPE.”

For the interiors, they worked with Eline Hissink, a Dutch native and founder of Midcentury Modern LA. “She would consult with us on every step of the construction,” Nicole says. “We had a lot of conversations about furniture too.” With a particular love for mid mod’s European roots, Nicole and Justin were passionate about purchasing high-quality pieces with Danish influence that would let the bones of the house and the surrounding views shine. “That’s why we kept it really minimalistic, trying to accentuate nature and the surrounding landscape,” Nicole says. “We also purposely picked those timeless classics that were all designed during the ’60s,” she says.

Pieces like a custom-ordered, olive green Eames chair and the PK61 coffee table by Poul Kjaerholm are pure in their aesthetics. “All of our furniture has very sleek, stainless steel legs, not just the coffee table but also the other chairs and our sofa. Everything has a similarity to it,” Nicole says. The furniture selections, lighting and minimal artwork boast clean lines, natural materials and pops of color common for the time period. “All our furniture—and even our house itself—is all about the lines. There are no curves. It’s just about the lines, the horizon, the sky, the pool,” Nicole says. On a sleek console table in the living room, a copy of David Hockney’s *Splash* is showcased as a tribute to the house they’ve so carefully curated. “When our friends visit, they often say it reminds them of that picture, and it feels fitting,” Justin says. ⚛

SEE RESOURCES, PAGE 88

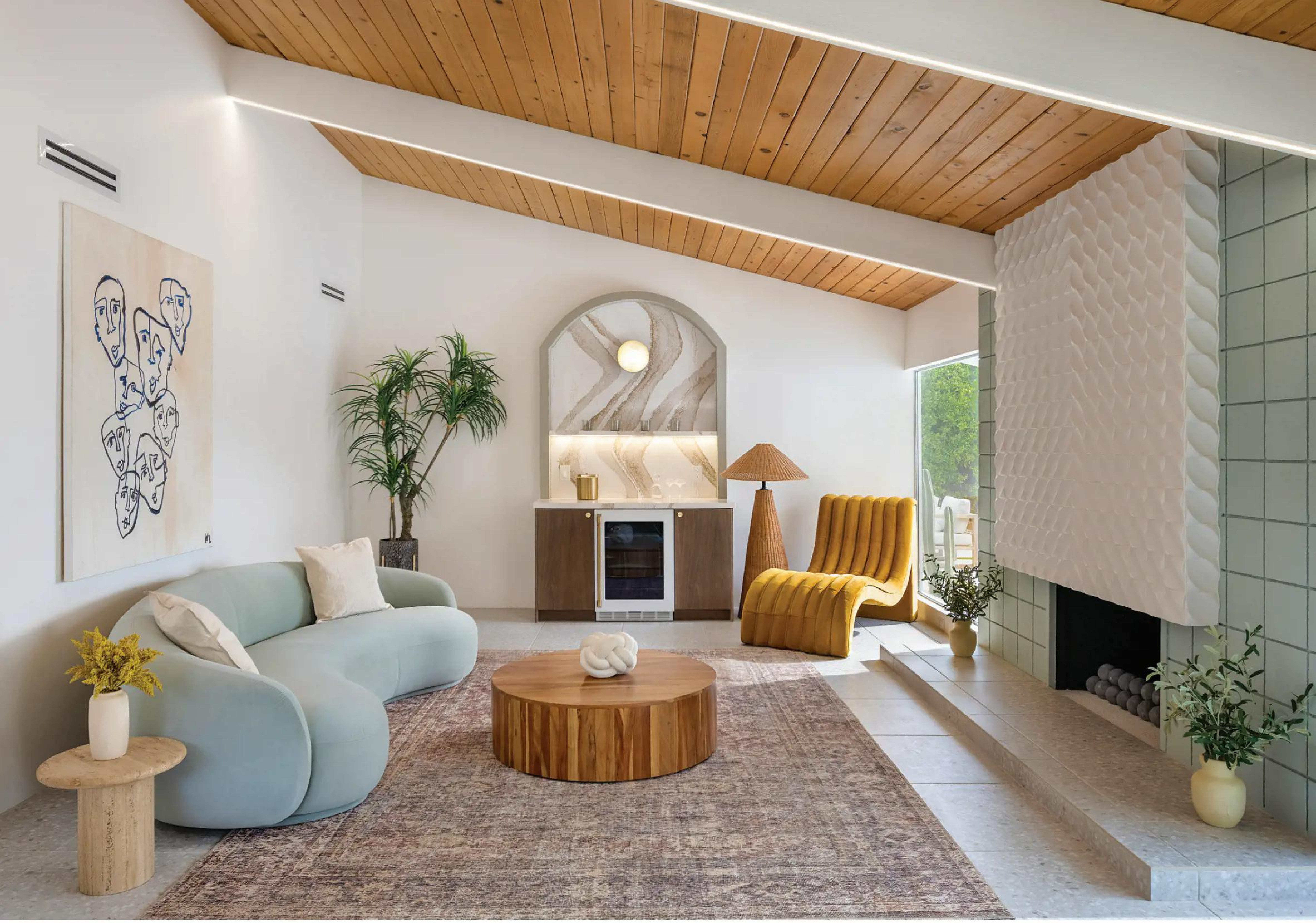
A major and important part of the renovation involved widening the deck. "Not having a yard, we wanted to at least have a deck area so the kids could ride their bikes and run around," Justin explains.

LAID-BACK LIVING

A Palm Springs home is renovated into a tranquil retreat.

By **Michelle Mastro** • Photography by **Oscar Flink**

The striking triangular breeze-block is an original feature. Homeowner Alex Chuo, owner of Solidified Development, a renovation business in the Coachella Valley, painstakingly took down each panel, refurbished their wood frames and then reinstalled them.



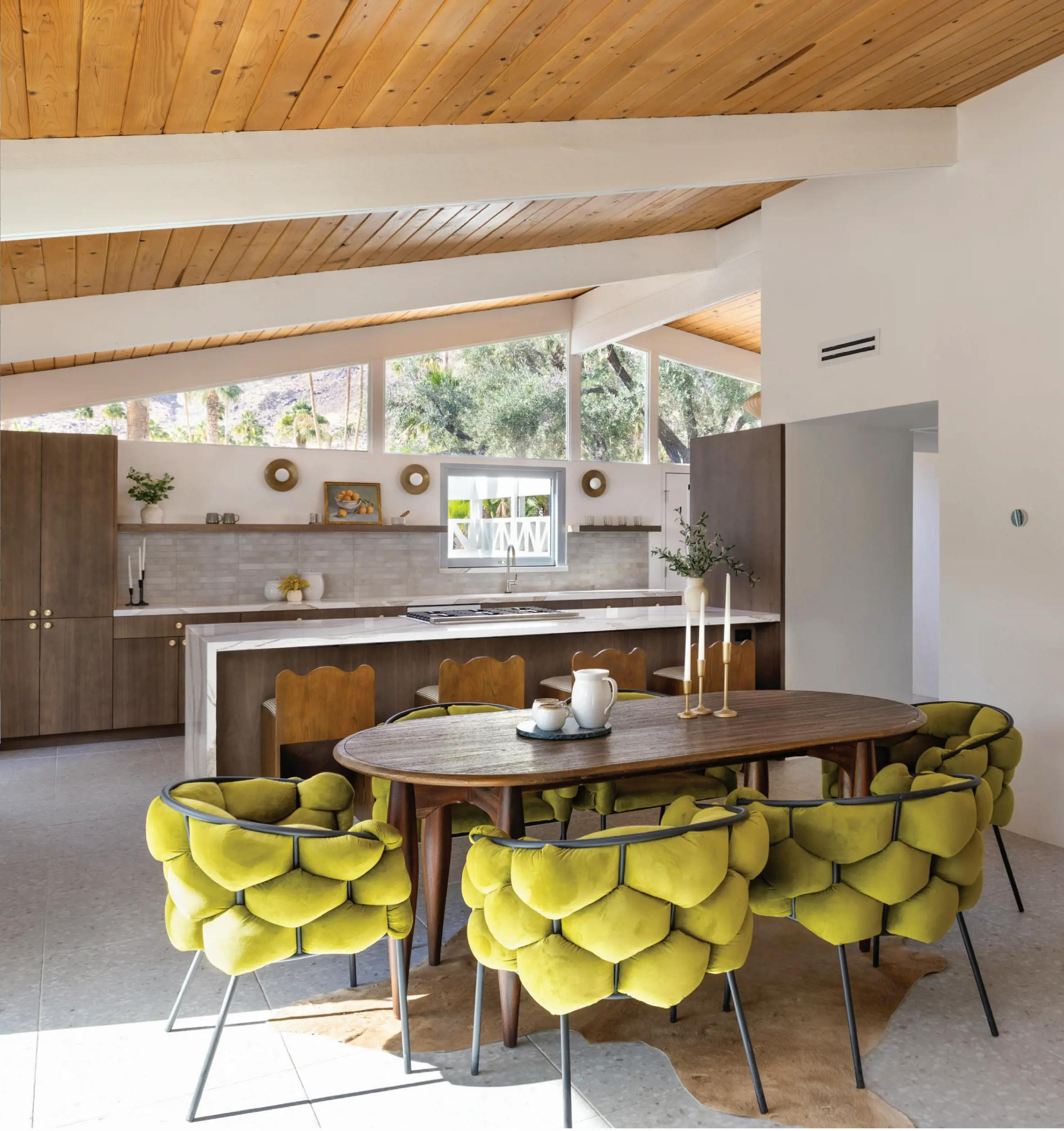
THE LIVING ROOM GOT A MODERN-LUXURY LIFESTYLE UPDATE WITH THE ADDITION OF A SMALL BAR DECKED OUT IN THE SAME SLAB OF QUARTZ AS IN THE KITCHEN.

HOME IS A SANCTUARY, a refuge from the hustle and bustle of daily life. Nowhere is this more evident than in a recent home renovation in Palm Springs, California, that embraces this ideal by sprucing up the home to feel like a contemporary day spa, combining the racquet-club mentality of old school Palm Springs with a modern twist. Expertly renovated and restored by Alex Chuo and his team at Solidified Development, the house weaves together classic MCM styles and infuses them with a resort vibe, making the home feel like a destination unto itself.

BLUE MOOD

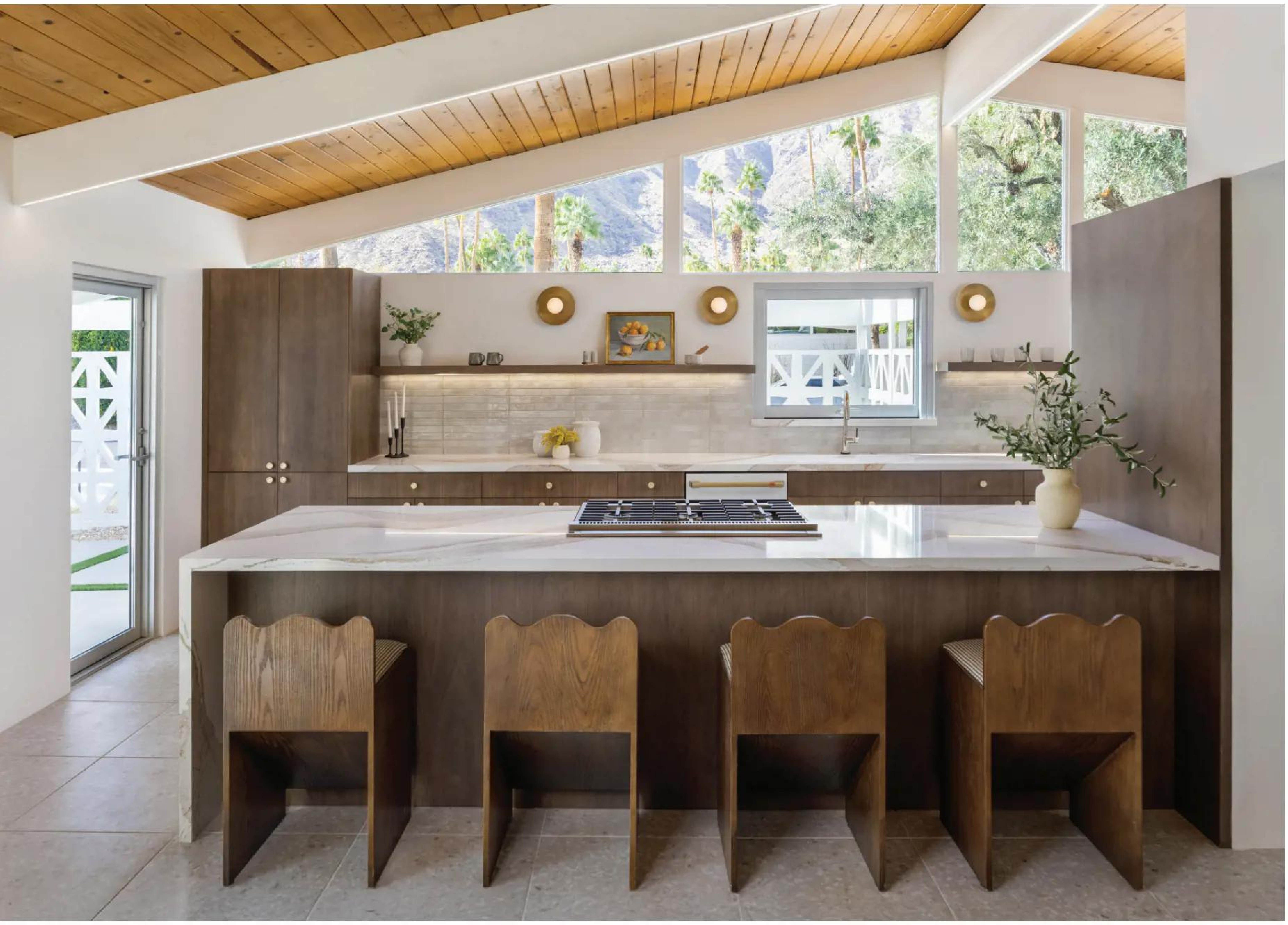
The house was designed by William Krisel and built in 1963 in the Vista Las Palmas neighborhood. To create a feeling of calm, Alex chose to forgo bright colors and incorporate subtle blue shades. “I wanted colors that would be easy on the eyes,” he explains. “I didn’t want to be so in your face with the colors.” Starting from the front door, pops of eggshell blue set the tranquil tone, appearing in the living room’s crystal blue sofa and the fireplace’s brickwork Alex had painted the same color as the front door; these colors are later carried on in the primary and guest bathroom tiles.

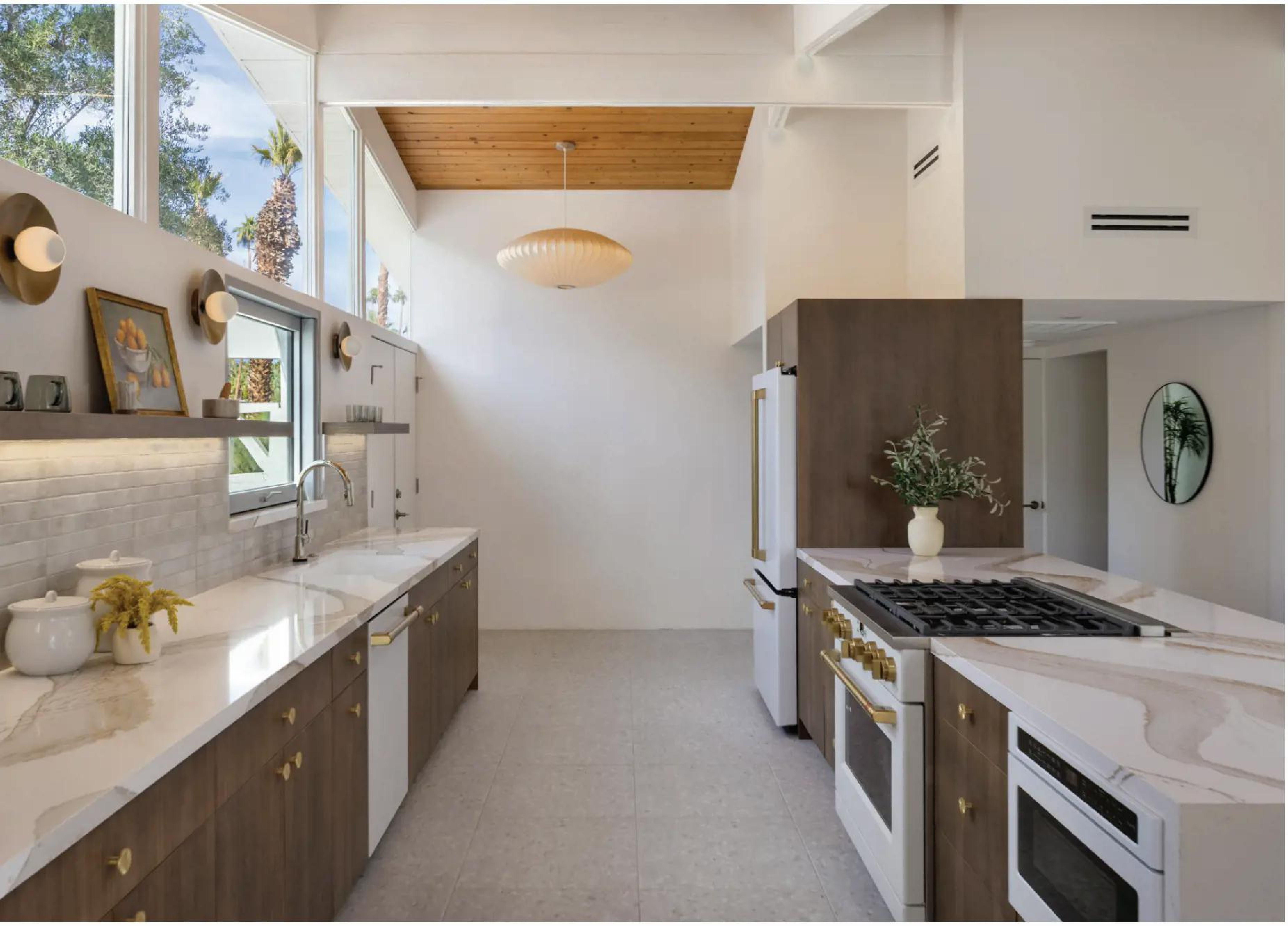
Alex wanted the cool shades to underscore a classic Palm Springs resort feel. He sought to reimagine a vibe harkening back to the Atomic Era of Palm Springs, when members of the rich and famous—from Marilyn Monroe to Elvis Presley—flocked to Palm Springs for the city’s eminent racquet and golf clubs or to spend their days poolside, basking in the desert sun. Alex hoped many of the home’s refreshed designs captured the sensibilities of the MCM era. “I wanted the atmosphere to be very zen. I wanted the house to feel like a sanctuary or escape from the everyday.”



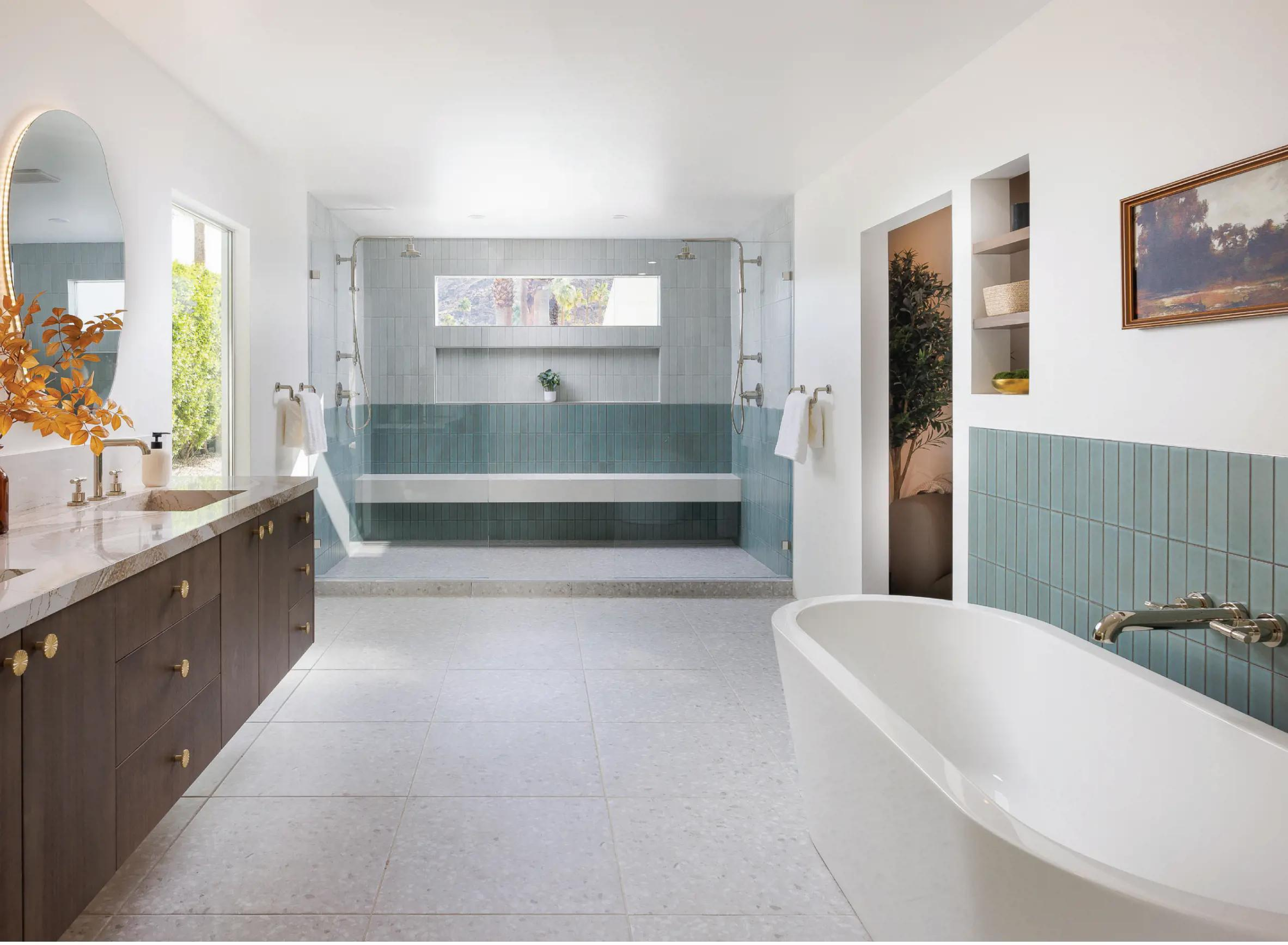
opposite: Everything from the smooth stucco outside to the home's interior walls were redone to foster a sanctuary feel. This includes the curvy tile on the fireplace Alex added to create a smooth, relaxing vibe to the living room. "But we figured there was too much plain white with the tile, so that's why we painted the brick the same color as the exterior door," he says. With the help of an interior designer, Alex was able to locate a sofa that matched the color as well.

above: Subtle green chairs were added to the kitchen and dining space to sprinkle in opposing earth tones, providing a stunning contrast to the brown colors throughout the spaces.





The walnut cabinets were custom made to offer a cooler tone when paired against the warm wood tone of the perfectly preserved wood ceilings. Alex and his team added the quartz countertops and the beautiful waterfall-edge island with gold and brown specks to help draw the viewer's eye back down to the kitchen and away from the tall ceilings.



One of the largest bathrooms Alex has ever designed, the space boasts muted blue-green tile in the shower and walnut cabinets to foster a cohesive look with the rest of the home's interior design choices.

BURIED TREASURE

Several hidden features of the home helped foster the mid mod resort atmosphere. As it turned out, a few important design elements were perfectly preserved. "When we first entered the home, we saw that the windows had been covered up with sheet metal, so it was very dark there," Alex says. But the sheet metal also blocked out the glaring desert sun, safeguarding the original door and window frames. "There were also these large soundboards covering the ceiling," he says. "When we removed those, we realized the original wood was still there and intact—in fact, it looked brand new. It was a very wonderful surprise." All Alex and his team had to do was cover the ceiling with the clear sealant.

To complement these rich wood ceilings, the team ushered in other classic MCM design details. For example, walnut, a classic MCM material, was used in the custom-made kitchen cabinets, while the countertops dazzle in a Cambria stone called Brittanica, a warm gold color of quartz, complete with speckles of brown that pair well with the walnut. The team also opted for terrazzo floor tile for a smooth, minimalist touch that also paid homage to the original architect of the home, William Krisel.

Krisel designed many homes across the desert, including those in the Smoke Tree Valley (now known as Twin Palms for the pair of palm trees that graced each of the homes). He is also remembered today for his work on the Ocotillo Lodge, Las Palmas Estates (Vista Las Palmas), Kings Point and Canyon View Estates and the Racquet Club Estates. "Krisel used a lot of terrazzo in these outstanding works, so I wanted to pay homage to him by incorporating this stone," Alex says.

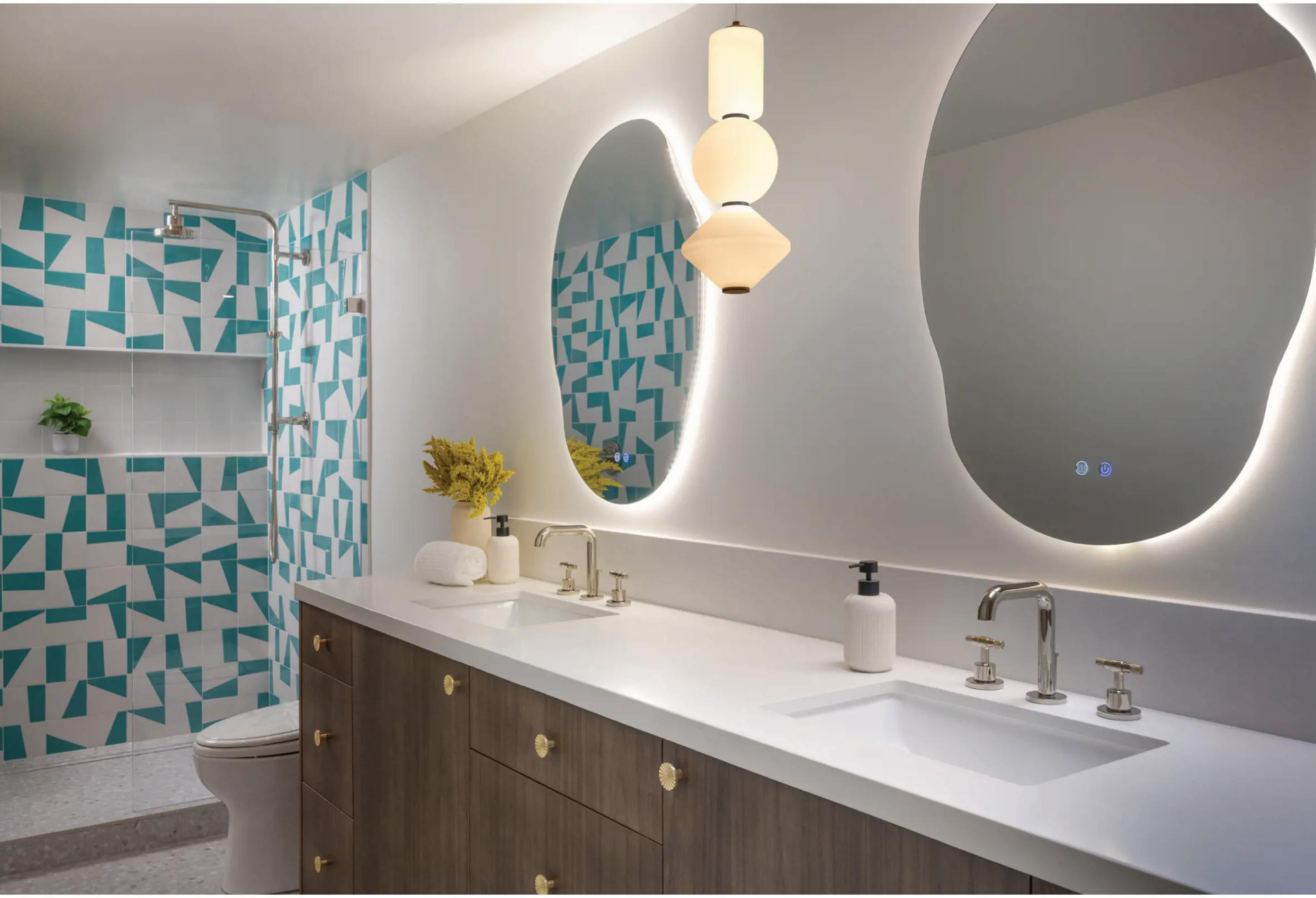
During the demo to the floor, Alex and his team discovered the original entryway had poured terrazzo by the front door. "But it had been damaged somehow in the home's prior life and covered up. If it had been in good condition, we would have kept it, of course."

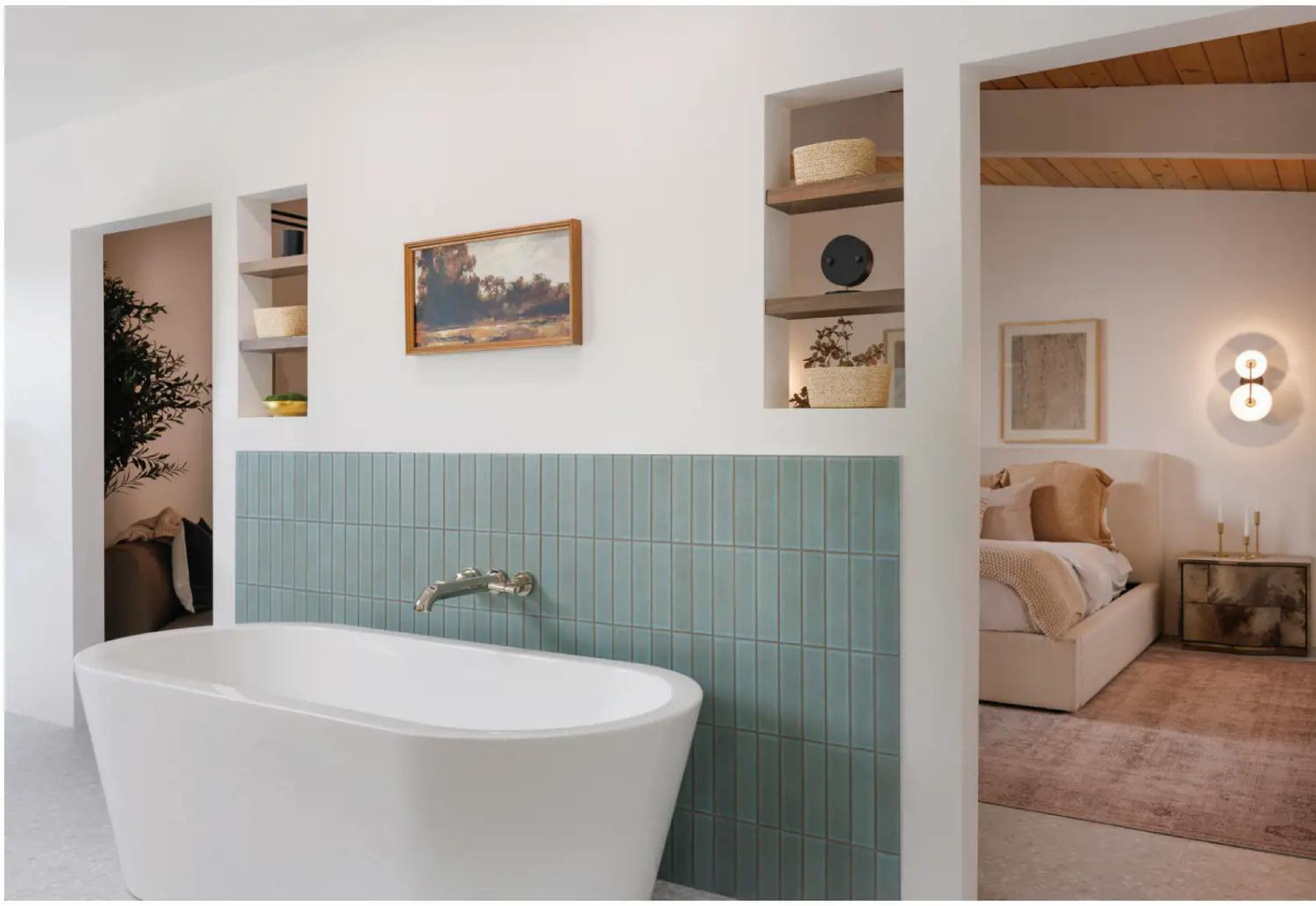
MODERN LIVING

Despite all the allusions to, and celebrations of, MCM design, the leading idea behind the renovation was to restore the home for a contemporary lifestyle. Today, Palm Springs is known for its dining scene, country clubs and as a popular weekend getaway. "It's no longer just a place for retirees or 'snowbirds,' to flock to," Alex says. "Thanks to the popularity of Coachella and major investments from huge corporations, Palm Springs has had a major resurgence, and we wanted to showcase that in our design choices in the house," Alex says.

Hence, the house got some present-day interventions. In the kitchen, for example, where the fridge is, there used to be a wall separating the space from the entryway. "During the mid-century, no one wanted to see the kitchen, but we switched it up with an open concept layout," Alex says. Meanwhile, the living room got a modern-luxury lifestyle update with the addition of a small bar decked out in the same slab of quartz as in the kitchen, and the primary bathroom got a double dose of luxury with the two shower heads, a simple but beautiful white quartz shower bench, and a standalone tub.

Other parts of the home were influenced by lavish Los Angeles trends. "When people buy into Palm Springs from LA, they tend to bring their interior designers," Alex says. To lean into the LA-inspired aesthetics, Alex opted for the fireplace and fire-pit balls like the ones he'd seen in an episode of "Keeping Up With the Kardashians" and gracing his Instagram feed. "In the past, we used crushed glass in the fireplace and fire pit, but now Palm Springs is really up to date with its trends," he says. ⚛





opposite: The primary bedroom provides a warm counterpart to the home's many cool shades. The room's rich, warm color palette leans into muted pinks, grays and honeyed wood tones.

above: In the guest bathroom, Alex created a dramatic moment with his inclusion of the fun, irregular-patterned tile. The bright aqua blue pairs well against the mostly white and brown room. Amorphous, organic-shaped mirrors and light fixture add to the slight drama.

right: A traditional style oil painting hangs above the standalone tub, perfectly tying together the warm color palette in the adjacent space peeking through the wall's cutout shelves, and the cool blue and green tones of the bathroom.

PALM SPRINGS COOL

How to incorporate a muted, cool color palette to create a contemporary retreat look and feel.

- **Opt for Neutral Walls.** Alex chose neutral white walls to help showcase the other muted tones he selected, like the eggshell blue-gray colors. White walls draw attention to the other color choices appearing elsewhere in the home. "But at the same time, don't elect for a stark white hue for walls," Alex says, as this may create a jarring juxtaposition with other subtle colors you may use in your home.

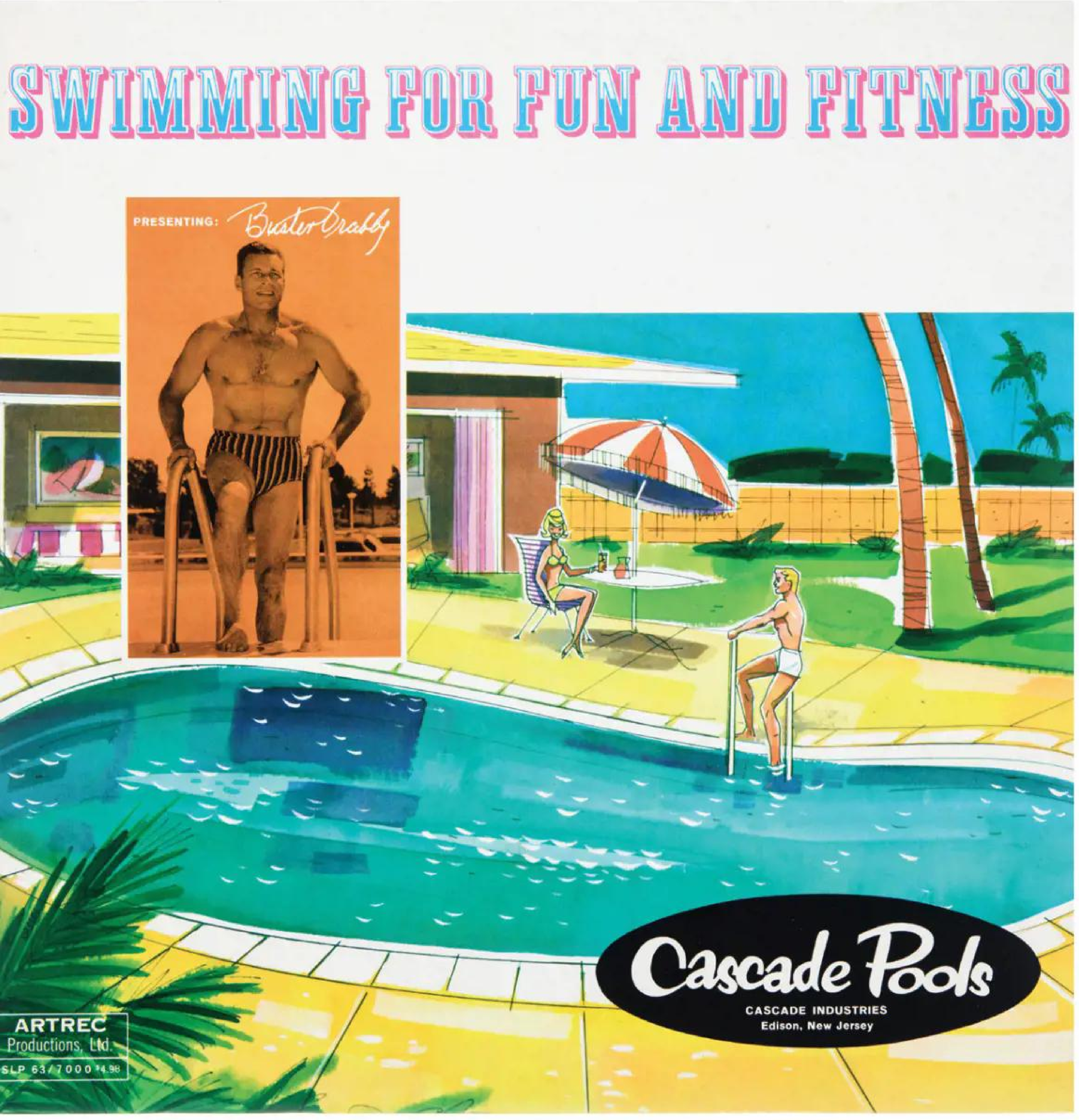
- **Rely on Earth Tones.** Alex chose lots of blues and browns for the home to create a zen-infused ambience. But other shades like tan, beige or cream in rugs, décor and upholstery feel natural and help create a stable, grounded feeling. Meanwhile, earthy green colors are abundant in nature and have a soothing effect on the mind, which also helps reaffirm the resort vibe you might be going for in your own home, Alex says.

Alex and his team kept the poolside minimalist to help draw viewer attention to the pool's refreshing blue water. Gray cement pavers are outlined in faux grass for a subtle pop of additional earth tones.

SELF-IMPROVEMENT REWIND

Before social-media influencers, there were Mid Century Modern instructional records.

By **Michelle Mastro** • Images courtesy of **MIT Press**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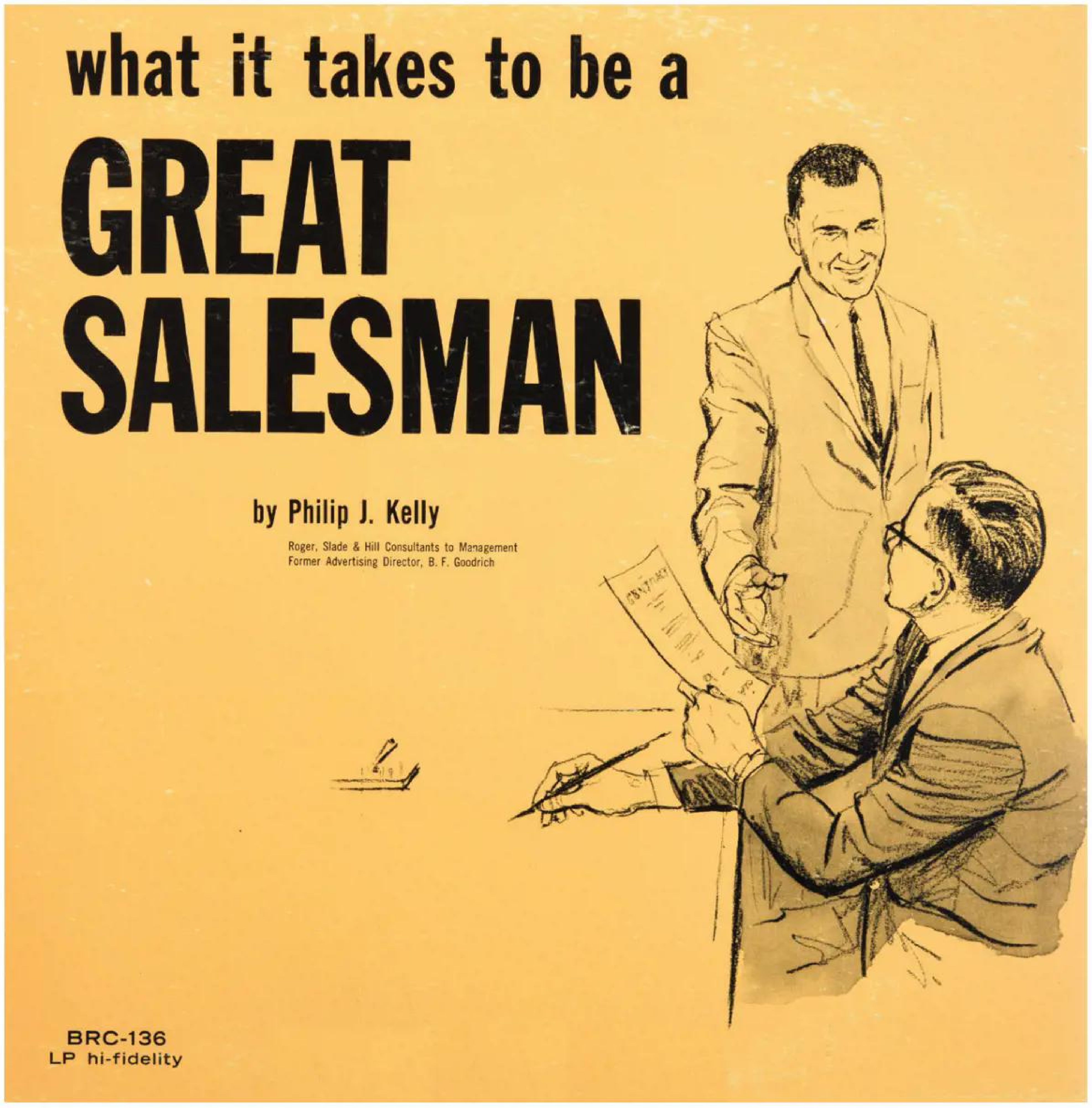
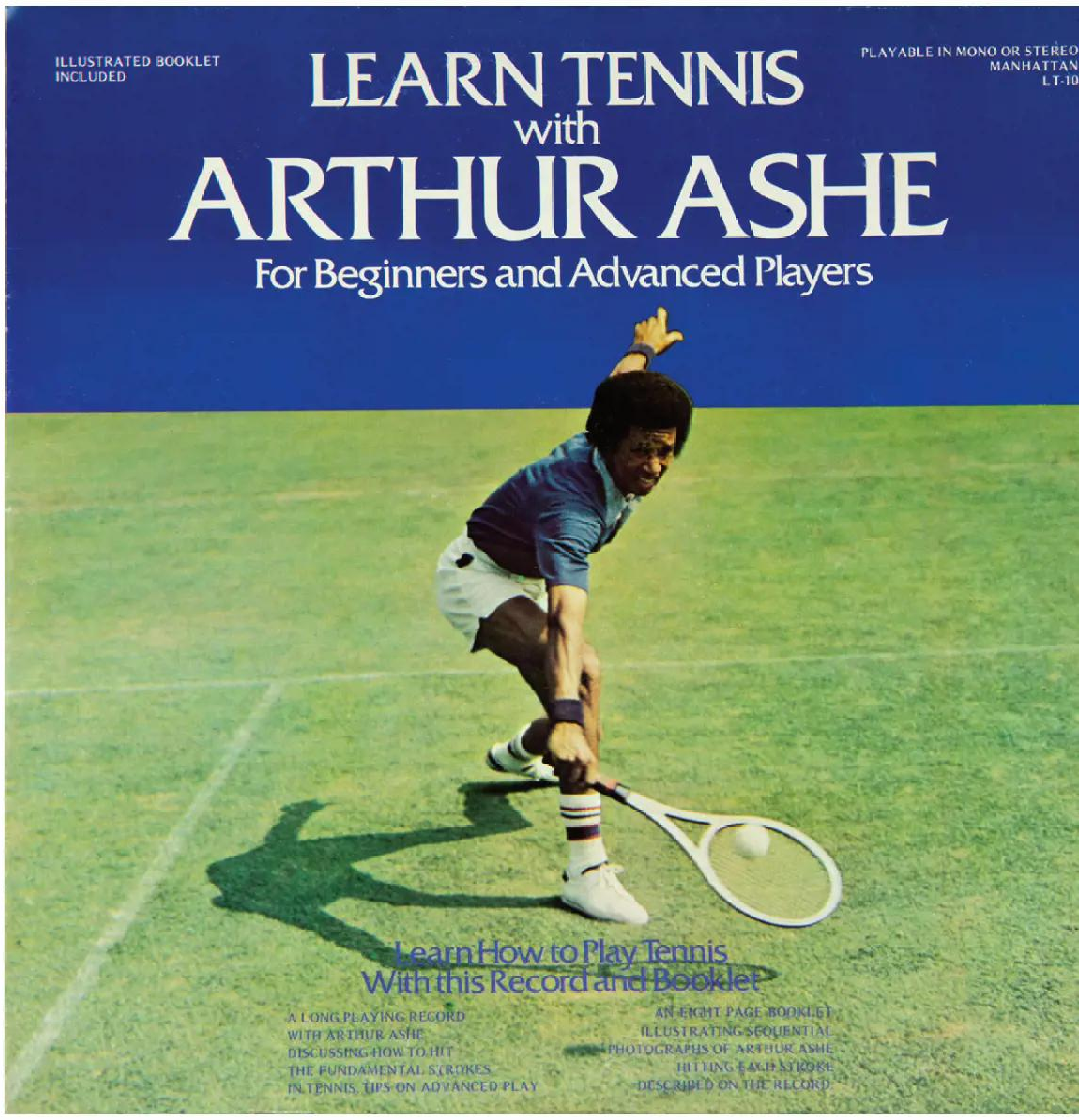

what it takes to be a
GREAT SALESMAN
by Philip J. Kelly
Roger, Slade & Hill Consultants to Management
Former Advertising Director, B. F. Goodrich
BRC-136
LP hi-fidelity

above, left: The cover of "Swimming for Fun and Fitness" features a modern suburban house's attractive backyard pool and a few palm trees dotting the landscape. **above, right:** "What It Takes to Be a Great Salesman": According to Jonathan and Janet, this record features a straightforward, no-nonsense, let's-get-down-to-business style. "Phillip J. Kelly, former advertising manager, B. F. Goodrich, tells semi-inspiring tales of salesmen being the best and meeting their mark," they write.

SELF-IMPROVEMENT GUIDES were around long before influencers on social media taught their followers how to pair wine and negotiate the biggest pay raise. In the mid century, self-help hopefuls turned to the record player to learn how to enhance their golf swings or craft superior cocktails. Instructional records are no longer around today, but they were so popular in the mid century that Disney's Goofy would routinely use them in his famous "How To" shorts. Indeed, before the DIY articles of lifestyle magazines and websites, people (even Goofy's "everyman") would turn to self-improvement records on vinyl, where they learned all manner of skills, from gardening to dancing.

In their new book, *Designed for Success*, authors, researchers and vinyl collectors Janet Borgerson and Jonathan Schroeder explore these self-help albums formerly lost to record store bargain bins. The book shares how the genre of instructional records "contributed to a powerful American vision of personal success," covering such instructional records as interesting or odd as "Secrets of Successful Varmint Calling," "You Be a Disc Jockey" and "How to Ski (A Living-Room Guide for Beginners)."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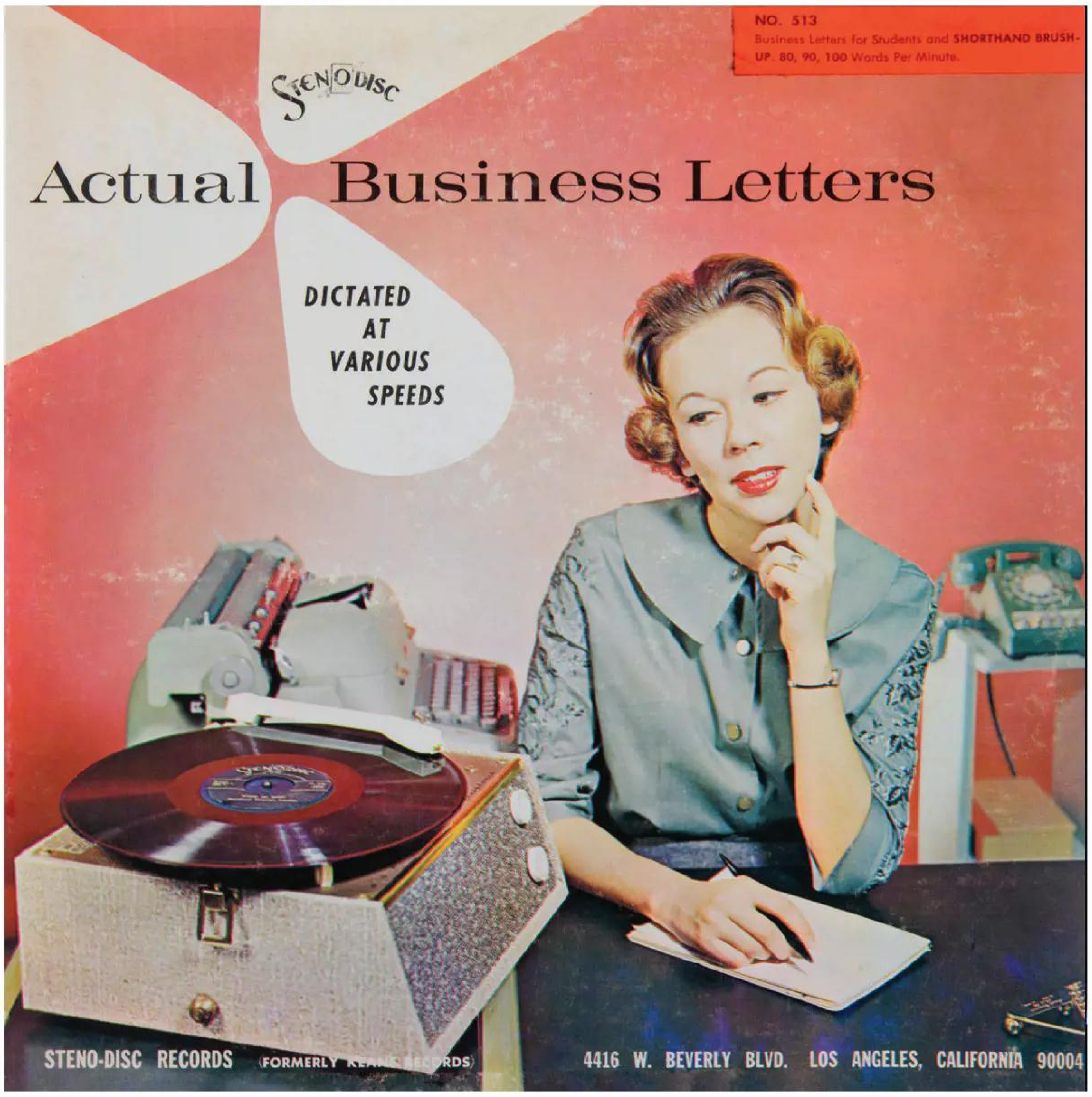
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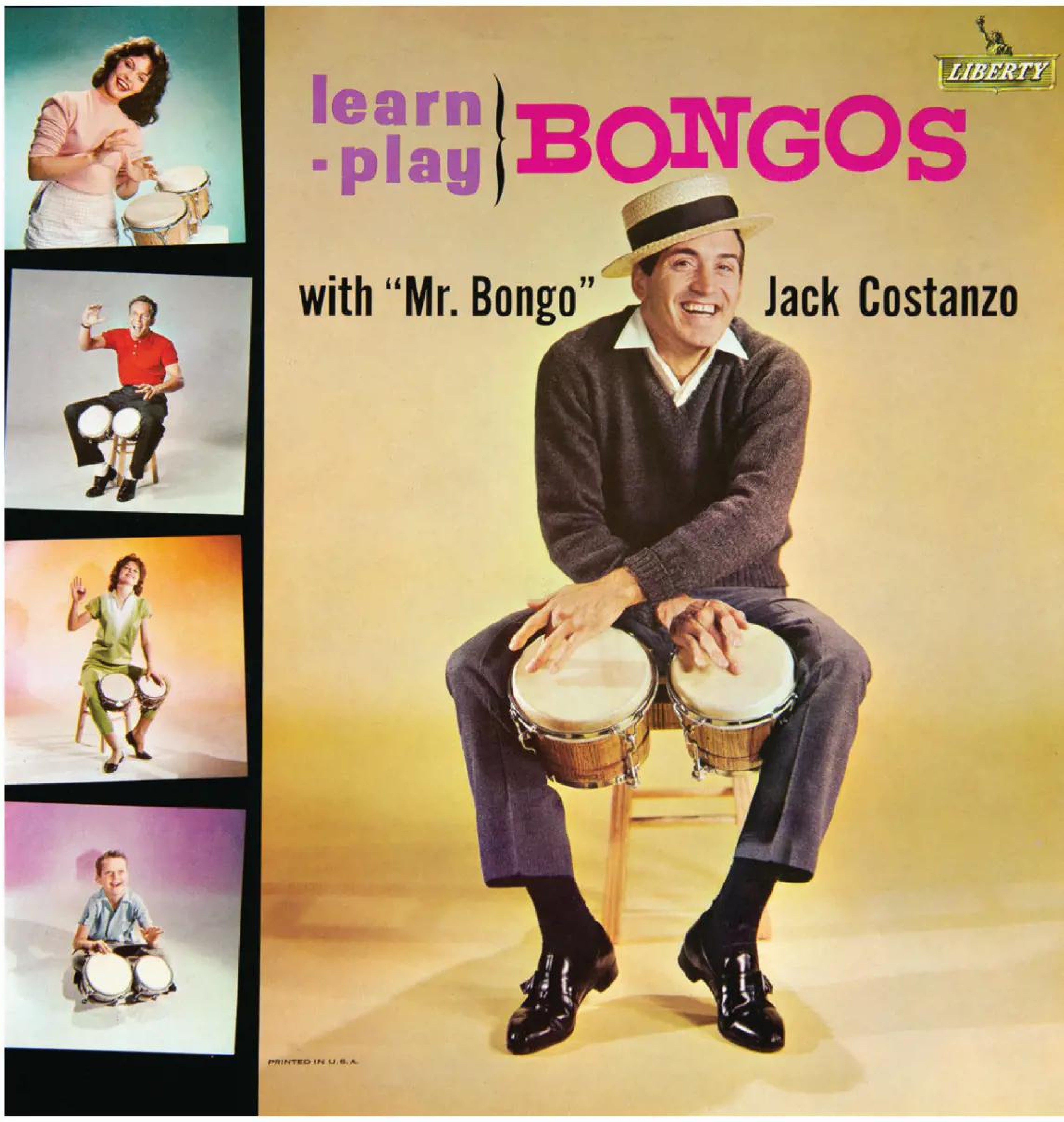
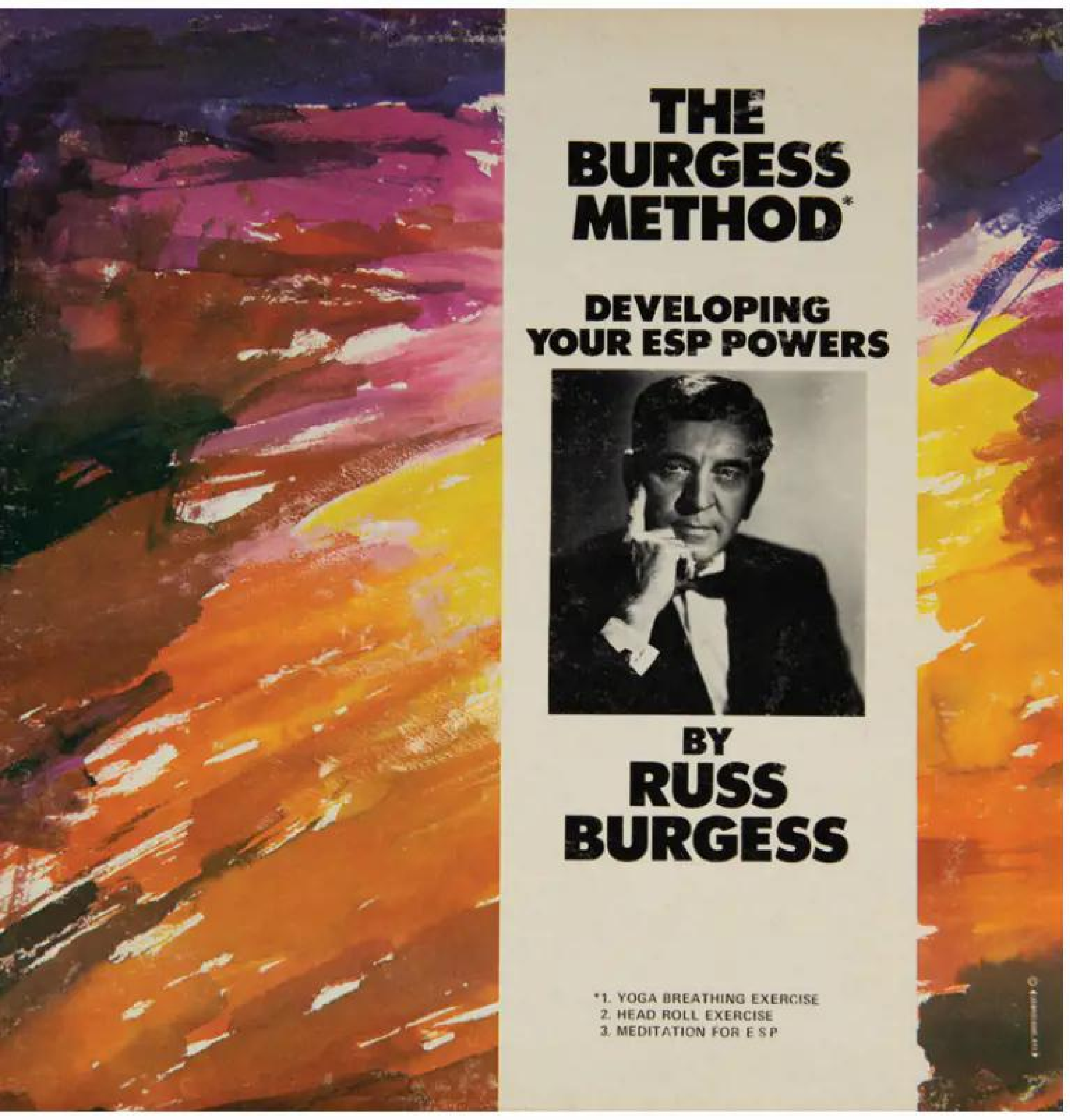

LIBERTY
learn-play BONGOS
with "Mr. Bongo" Jack Costanzo
PRINTED IN U.S.A.

above, left: "Actual Business Letters" covers secretarial work, a profession transformed by the introduction of electric typewriters. "Many instructional albums were designed to improve cognitive skills like communicating, listening and memorizing—useful outside of the office as well," write the authors of *Designed for Success*.

above, right: The cover for "Learn-Play Bongos With Mr. Bongo" shows a smiling Jack Costanzo happily jamming along with the target audience for the album: the whole American family. "Costanzo helped popularize bongos, playing enthusiastically into his ninety-eighth year," write the authors of *Designed for Success*.

top, right: The recording of "Learn Tennis with Arthur Ashe" consoles the eager athlete-in-training: "Don't be discouraged at first if your strokes are not working as well as you would like. Tennis takes time and practice."


THE BURGESS METHOD
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RED RIVER VALLEY · PAPA'S GOT A BRAND NEW BAG · SHOT GUN
GUITAR PHONICS
THIS ALBUM INCLUDES A 16-PAGE ILLUSTRATED BOOKLET WITH EASY-TO-FOLLOW DIAGRAMS! SUITABLE FOR ALL GUITARS
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> "IN OTHER PLACES, SUCH AS THE SOVIET UNION, YOU MIGHT BE BORN SOMETHING AND THAT WAS WHAT YOU WERE GOING TO BE. BUT IN THE UNITED STATES, IT WAS AN OPTIMISTIC TIME AND PEOPLE HAD AMBITION AND THE BELIEF THAT YOU COULD TRANSFORM YOURSELF."

Such records reveal the nuances of mid-century media production and consumption. "In America in the mid century, there was this notion that through individual effort you could improve yourself," Jonathan explains. "In other places, such as the Soviet Union, you might be born something and that was what you were going to be. But in the United States, it was an optimistic time and people had ambition and the belief that you could transform yourself."

However, much of this drive for self-improvement was closely linked to a desire to win the Cold War. The authors point out that there was a widespread feeling of national pride and exuberance in the mid century, along with a growing economy. Things were looking up for many Americans. And while the United States had just come out of a war, everyone was generally optimistic. "We talk in the book about this notion of participatory democracy, this sense that everyone needed to take on a certain pattern of behavior and if we did so we could outperform the Soviets," Janet says. "If the nation calls on us to be fit and multilingual and capable of a really great golf game—perhaps for diplomatic purposes—then it is up to each of us to roll up our sleeves, get in there, and learn."

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SAM DONAHUE
BEGINNING SKIING with SEPP UHL
STEREO

Authors Janet Borgerson and Jonathan Schroeder share some of their favorite instructional vinyl records.

INSTRUCTIONAL RECORD STARTER PACK

Jonathan and Janet share their favorite instructional record series worth checking out and collecting today.

- **Hear How To.** A popular series during the mid century, Hear How To covers everything from improving your vocabulary and speech to "Hear How to Talk to Your Children About the Facts of Life." "All the entries from this series can be entertaining to us today," Janet says, "but it's also really heartening to hear the experts earnest and truly trying to share their love of something, from deep-sea diving to bridge and fishing."
- **Music Minus One.** This popular series recorded every instrument in a song but one, encouraging the listener to fill the missing instrument by playing along with the other musicians. "We've met contemporary jazz musicians who learned this way by playing along with Music Minus One records," Jonathan says. "The records still have great value, allowing people to jam with the best. The company that made the records is still in business; they just stream now."

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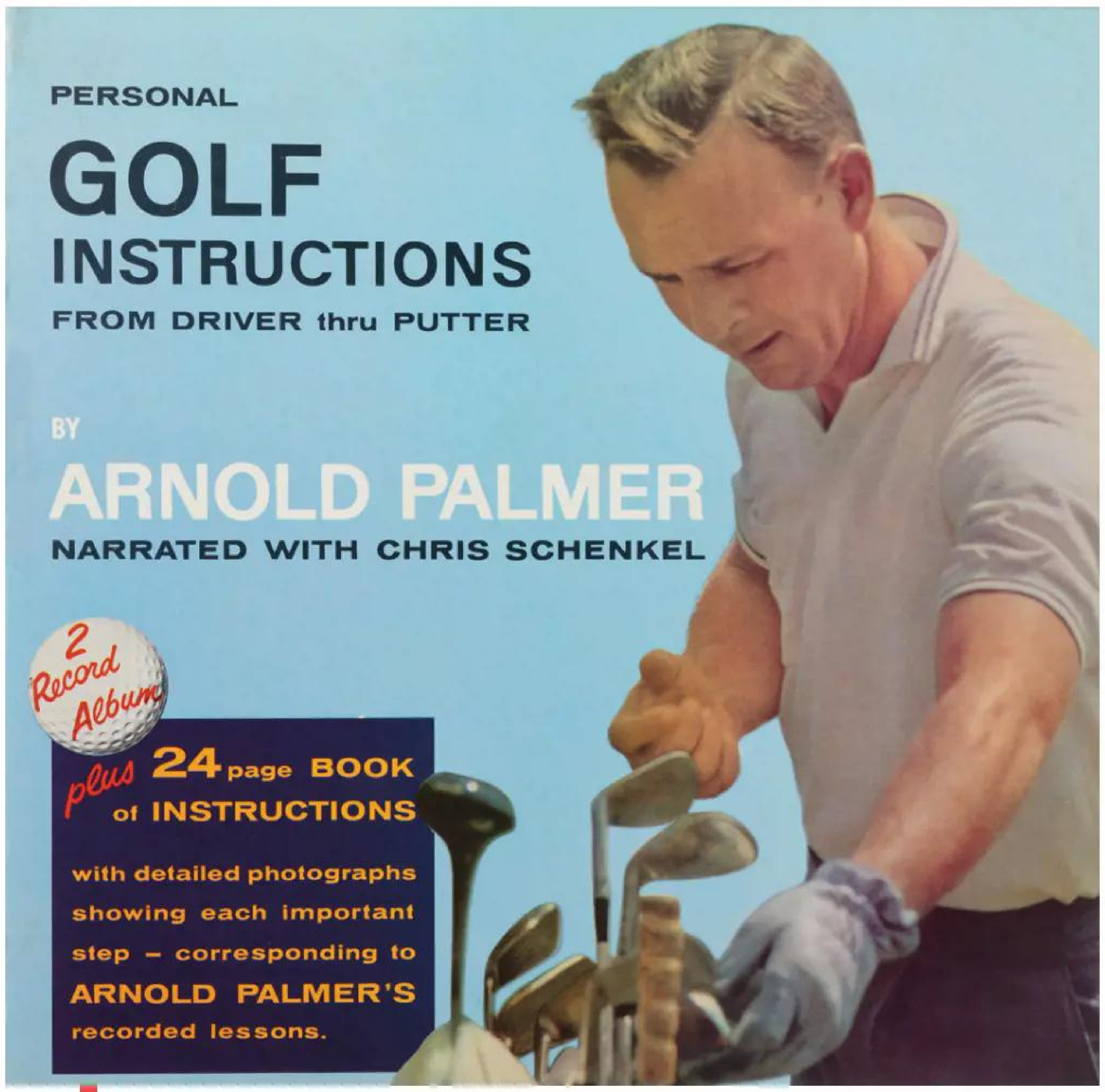
> TODAY, MANY PEOPLE MIGHT THINK ABOUT ELVIS OR THE BEATLES WHEN THEY IMAGINE RECORDS FROM THE ATOMIC ERA. "BUT DURING THE MID CENTURY, RECORDS WERE THOUGHT OF AS A SORT OF EDUCATIONAL TECH."

In fact, perhaps one of the best takeaways from the book is that it offers a hidden history of the recording industry. "When recordings were first invented, Thomas Edison thought that records would be more like self-help equipment, recording speeches, trainings, etc. It was only later that music took over," Jonathan says. Today, many people might think about Elvis or The Beatles when they imagine records from the Atomic Era. "But during the mid century, records were thought of as a sort of educational tech," Jonathan says. Janet agrees, "And they were—much in the way we might see PBS with programs like "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood" or "Sesame Street" as educational programming now."

For Jonathan and Janet, instructional vinyl records are fundamentally precursors to the social media world of influencers. "You can see that in the records from the '50s and '60s," Janet says. "Whichever expert happened to be on the record was trying to impart their expertise and build up their 'brand.' We see these instructional records as a direct line to today's social media." Jonathan adds, "People use the technology of their age to get their info into the household. Today it's social media; yesterday it was the vinyl record."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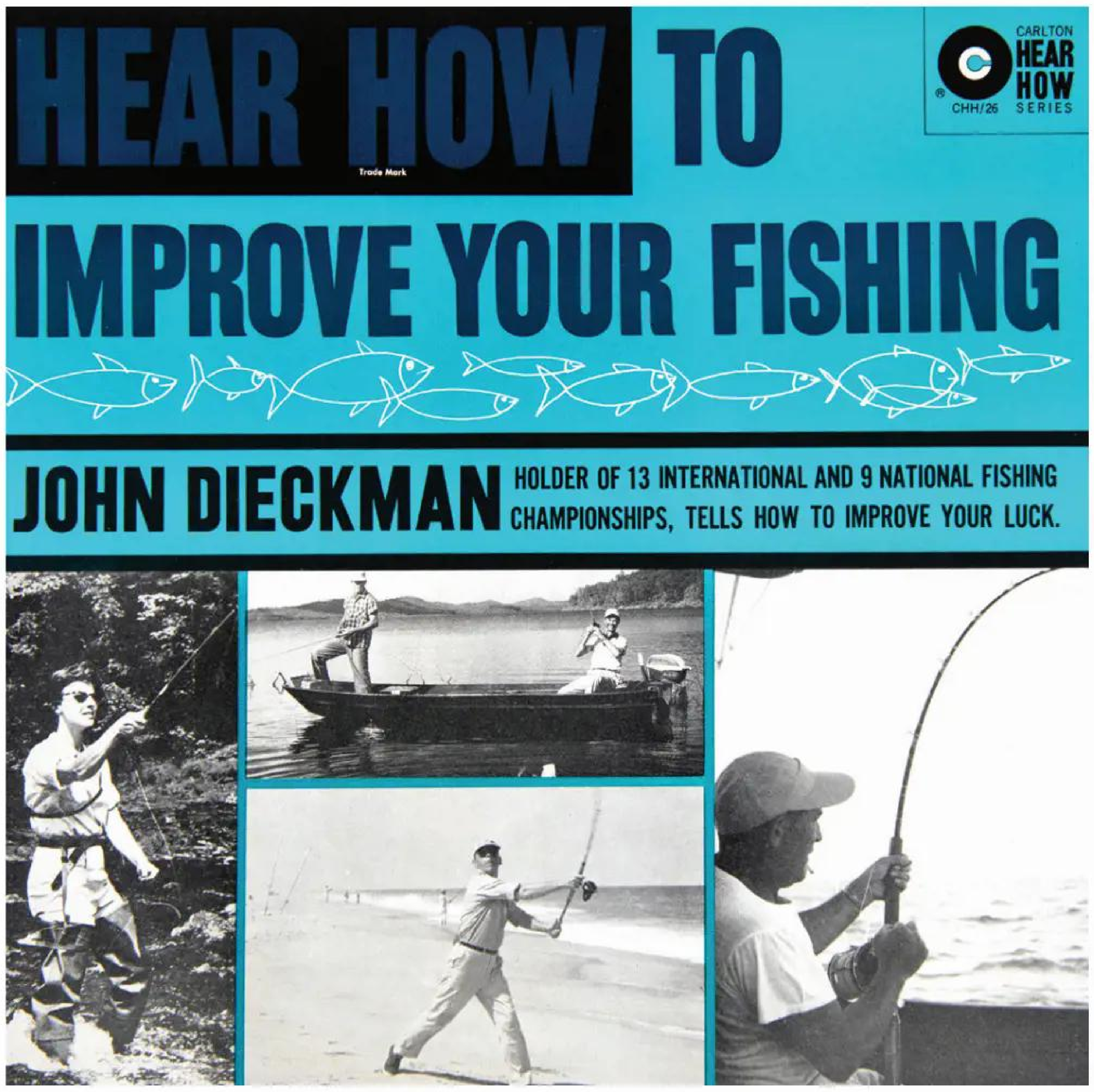
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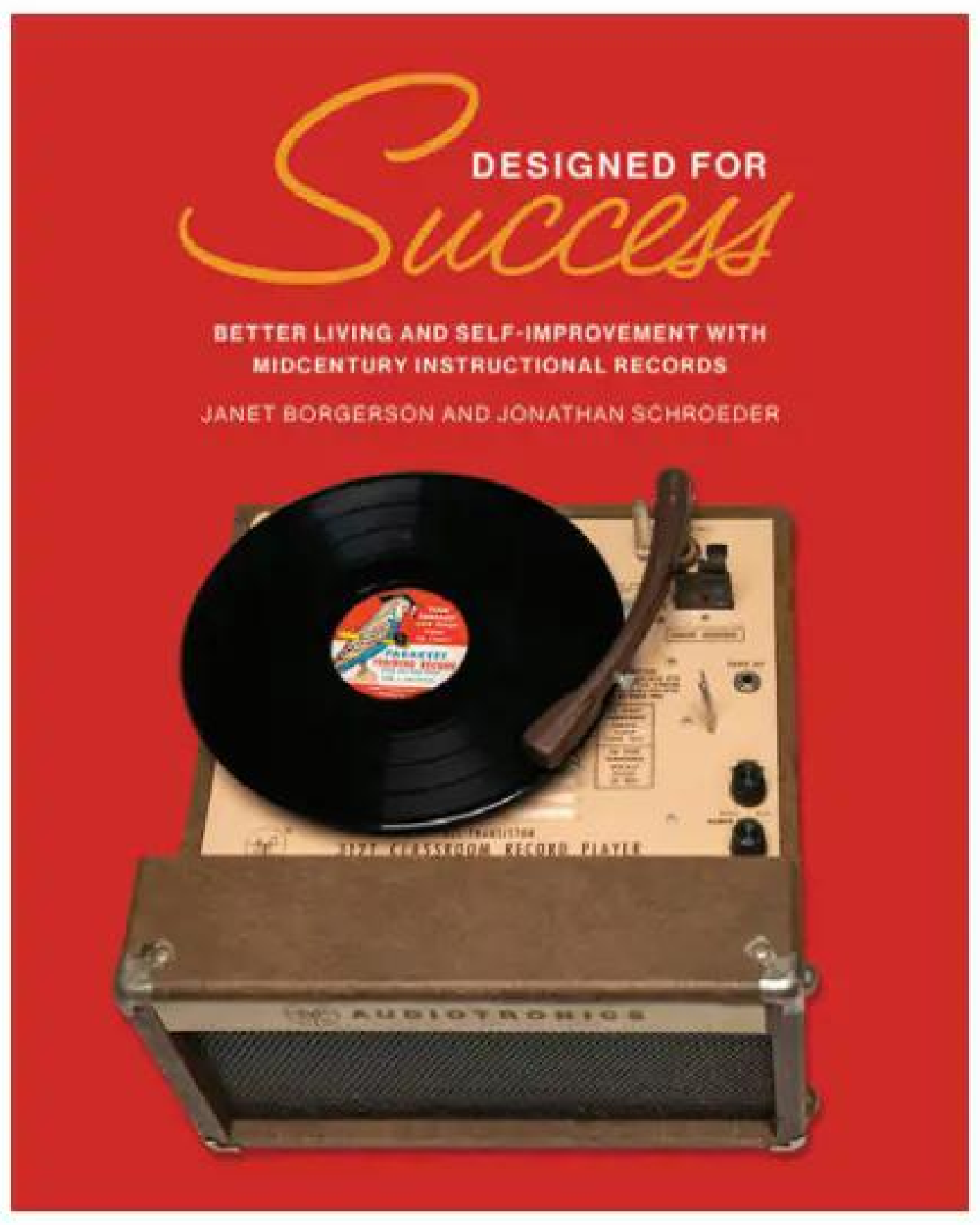
HOLDER OF 13 INTERNATIONAL AND 9 NATIONAL FISHING CHAMPIONSHIPS, TELLS HOW TO IMPROVE YOUR LUCK.

above, left: "Personal Golf Instructions": "Personal Golf Instructions from Driver Thru Putter" is an instructional record now coveted by sports memorabilia collectors. The album contained two LPs, a "step by step with Arnold Palmer" guide "to the instructions spoken on these records," a brief biography of Palmer and a list of his "most outstanding championship victories."

above, right: "Hear How to Improve Your Fishing": According to Janet and Jonathan, people today can learn a lot about mid-century culture from record covers. "Hear How to Improve Your Fishing" teaches listeners about diverse rods and reels and styles of handling, but on the cover there's a woman in waders, proving fishing isn't just a man's domain anymore.


DESIGNED FOR
Success
BETTER LIVING AND SELF-IMPROVEMENT WITH MIDCENTURY INSTRUCTIONAL RECORDS
JANET BORGERSON AND JONATHAN SCHROEDER

Designed for Success is a new book from MIT Press covering the hidden history of instructional vinyl records.

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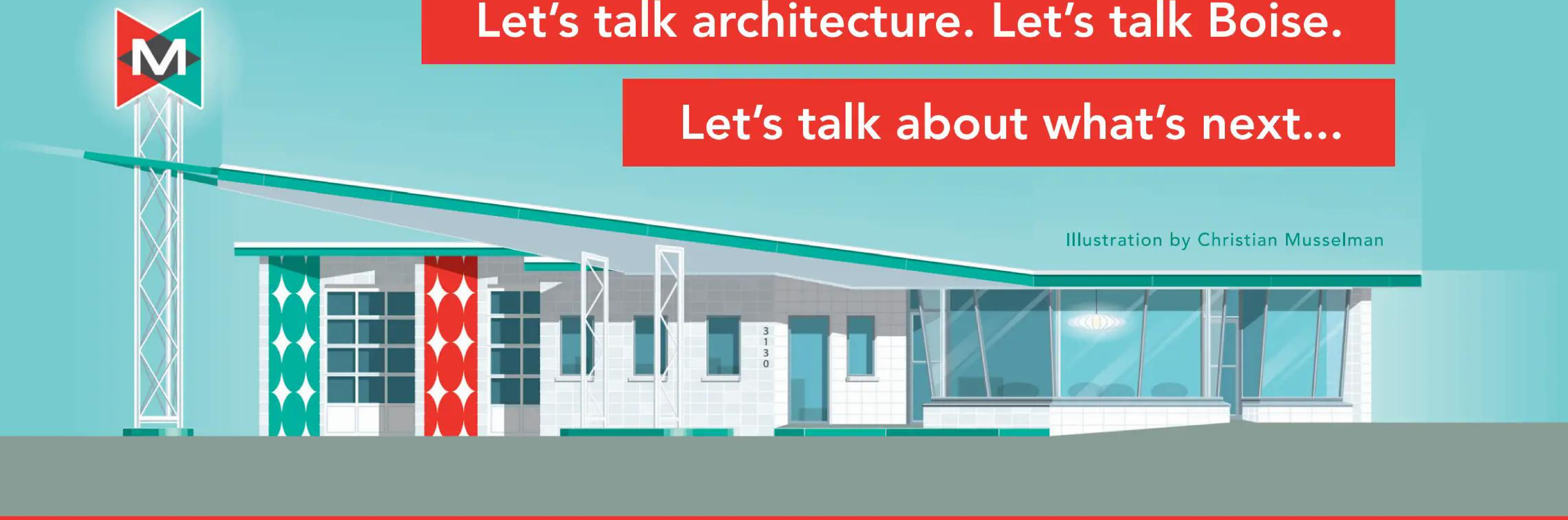

Illustration by Christian Musselman

Curators of Boise's Modern Legacy

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THE HOUSE WINS

This historic home in Las Vegas, Nevada, received preservation accolades for its artistic blend of glass, stone and native greenery that blurs the lines between interior and exterior.

By **Meryl Schoenbaum** • Photography by **April Mench**

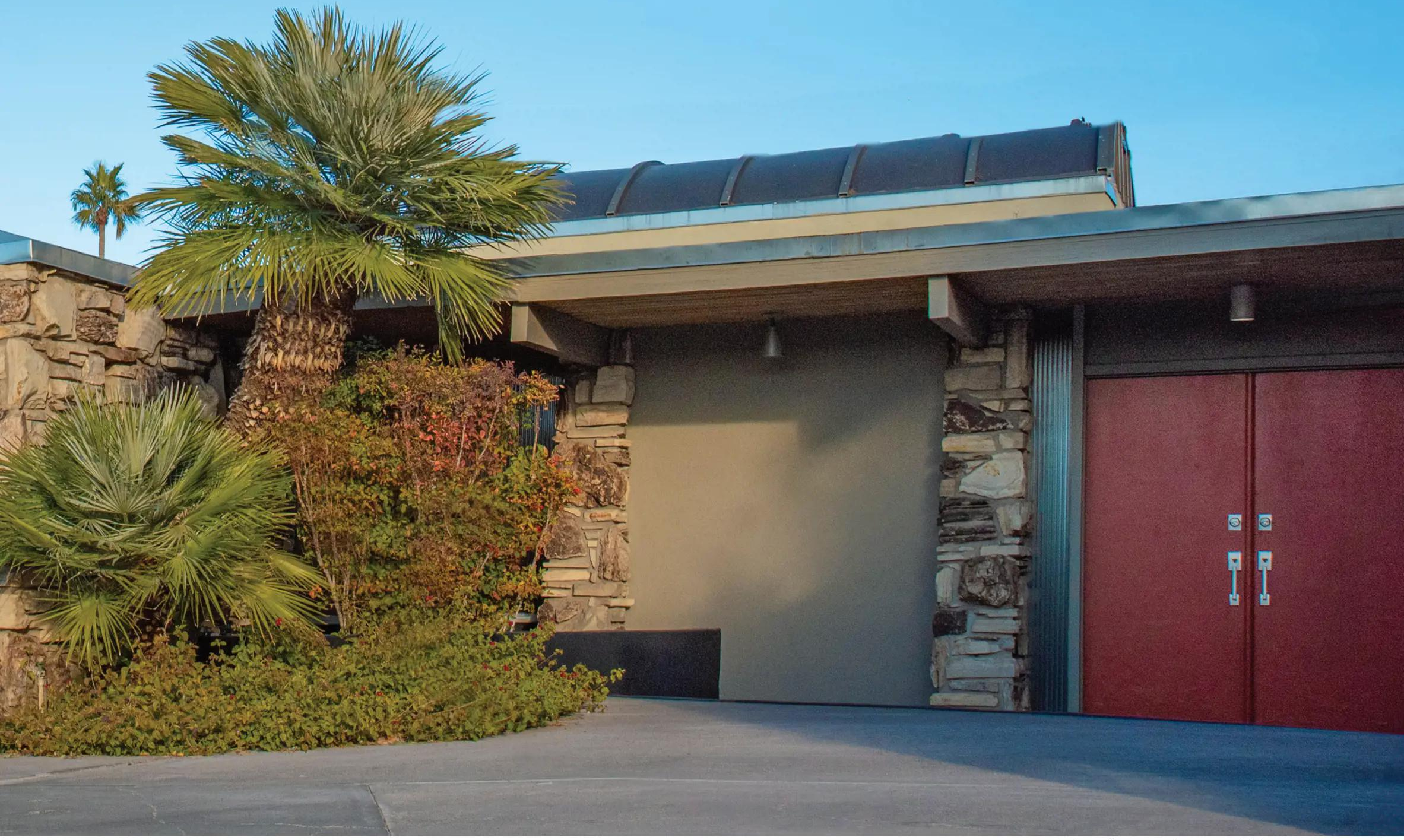
KIM BAVINGTON HAS an eye for design that flows from her career as an art-based business owner and art teacher to her creative choices in redesigning her mid-century home. "I have an art studio in my home where I teach kids art lessons. I also have a YouTube channel I film at home and sell 'art boxes' (art kits for kids with supplies and video tutorial links) on my website artclassesforkids.com," Kim says. Her artistic nature is evident in every square inch of her 1964-built, five-bedroom Las Vegas, Nevada, home.

"I found my home in 1998, when I wanted to move out of an overrated tract-home neighborhood," Kim says. "I was looking for an old-fashioned neighborhood where the mailman still comes to the door and neighbors take care of their homes because they take pride in them, rather than because the rules of their neighborhood make it mandatory. I wanted to live in a one-story home, which is a rare find in Las Vegas, and I loved the 'bones' of this house, which I could see was a gem, but at the time I first saw it the interior did not match the mid-century style at all."

The bones of the home are something special indeed, with an indoor butterfly roof in the living room, glass walls that provide an unobstructed view of the desert landscaping, stunning stonework that wraps around the interior and exterior walls and a delightful atrium, to name just a few.

"I loved the exterior architecture and the layout of the house as well as all the stonework and the ceiling," Kim says. "The house is very open and has so many large windows, but from the front there are only a few windows and an illusion that it is a smaller house than it actually is. The home is the only one in the neighborhood that sits on an angle rather than perpendicular to the street. I loved the mature landscaping, custom cabinets, large master bedroom and bathroom—and the centerpiece, the atrium."

The home, designed by Frechette & Toft, based in Los Gatos, California, is the only one in the neighborhood that sits on an angle on its lot, further differentiating this grand 4,300-square-foot MCM as a special design. This view of the roof beams and roof overhang highlight how the unusual roofline angles upward with beams in front. "We have large trees in our neighborhood, many between 60- to 85 years old. Recently, everyone is being forced to get rid of their grass and convert to desert landscaping, so you will see lots of new xeriscaping mixed in with large vintage trees."

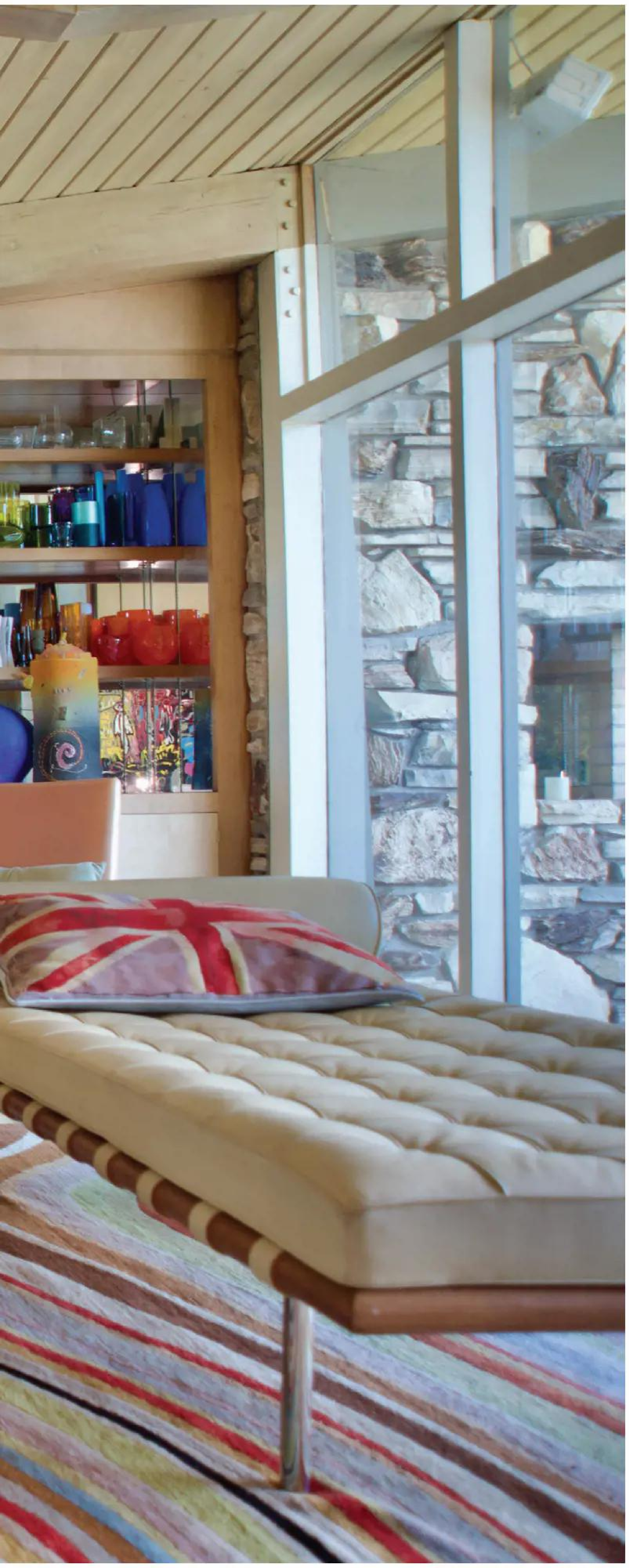


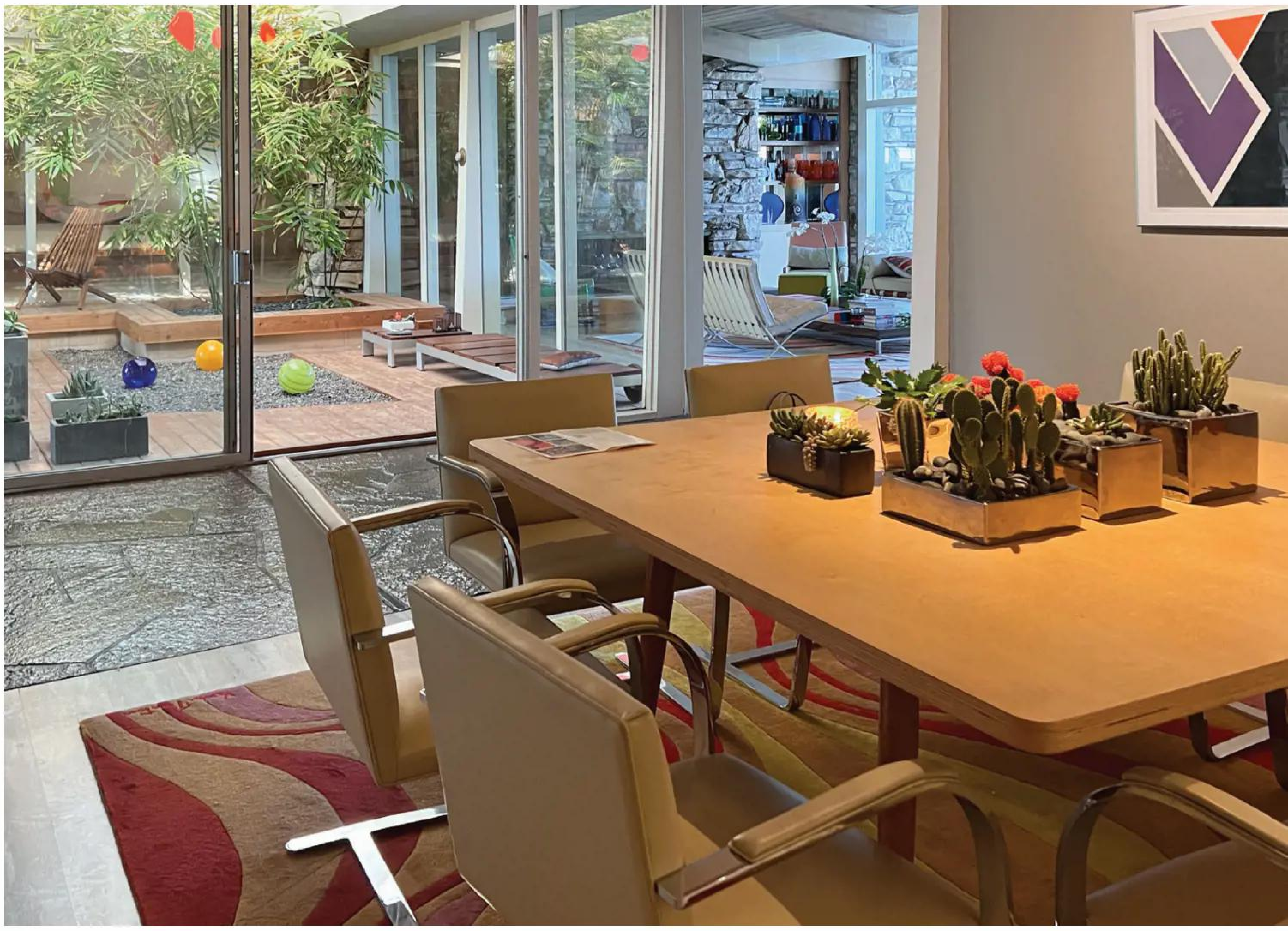
THE ATRIUM

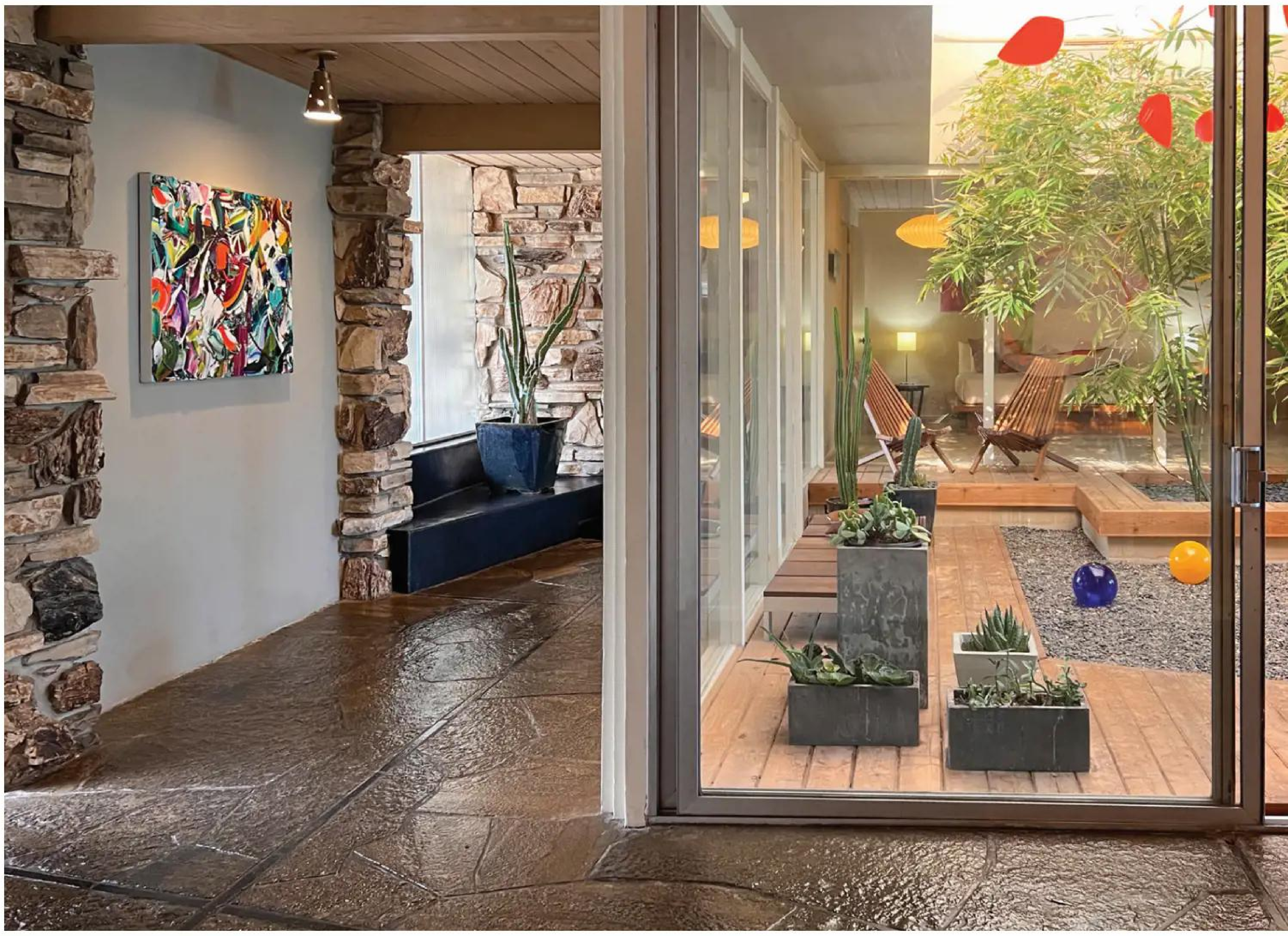
Kim describes the atrium as well as possible in words, but it is a special space that creates a feeling that is best experienced in person. "This room brings light to the entire home every day, as it rests in the center of the 4,300-square-foot home," Kim explains. "The primary bedroom is on one side and the dining room on the opposite side. It's wonderful to wake up in the morning and be able to look throughout the home upon opening my eyes."

OUTDOOR LIVING

Since the outdoor and indoor areas of the home are inextricably intertwined, Kim gave the exterior spaces just as much careful consideration as the inside of the home. "Originally, there was a mix of tall shrubs covering the bottom of the front windows that I replaced with lower-growing desert plants that have flowers in the summer," Kim says. "This helped feature the unique architectural lines of the house more."

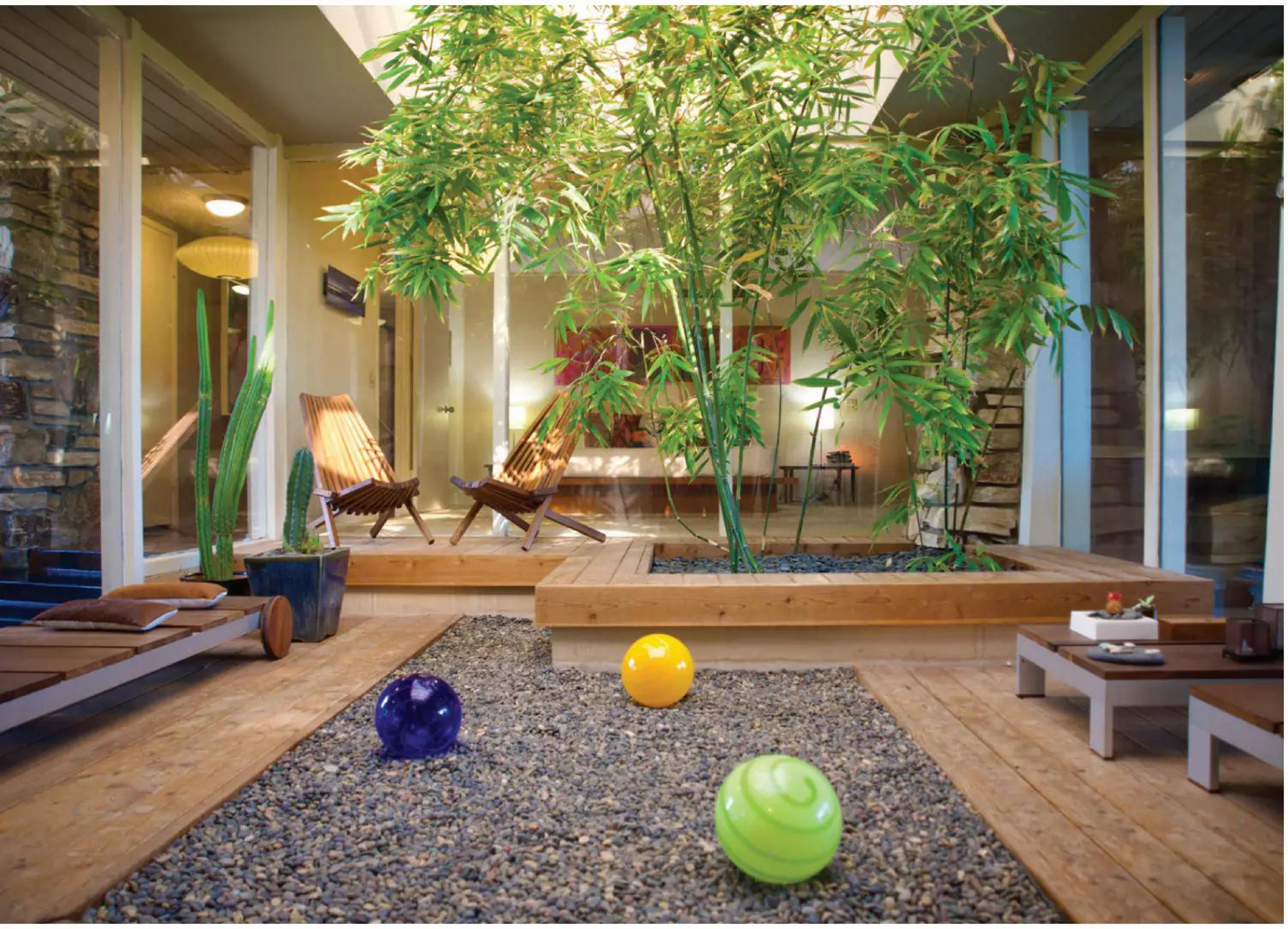






above, left: The living room sports a butterfly ceiling, relating to the butterfly roof. The stonework throughout the home extends around the exterior. It cuts through center of house, from east to west. The furniture is from the Mies van der Rohe Barcelona collection, which Kim purchased from Knoll. She bought the impressive coffee table 20 years ago and purchased the green and peach chairs at a deep discount. The area rug was designed by Paul Smith for the Rug Co. The Union Jack pillow is by Vivienne Westwood for the Rug Co. Colorful vases line the built-in shelves.

above, right: When she set her sights on styling, Kim's knowledge of design helped her turn her vision into reality. "Besides the bamboo, succulents and cacti, I added the patio furniture (two loungers and a table) that I picked up over 20 years ago on sale at Neiman Marcus. They are teak and aluminum—much too sensitive to have in outdoor desert living—but I felt they would not only survive in less heat but look great in my atrium. The two folding teakwood chairs are by Melino.



top: The atrium used to be an open-air courtyard, but a previous owner enclosed the top with more glass. It had green shag carpeting that didn't relate to Mid Century Modern style, so Kim replaced it with wood flooring. "I stripped it down to restore it to its original MCM architectural design," she says. "It is the central focal point of the home. From my bedroom, I can see through the house."

Sixty-year-old Mediterranean fan palm trees frame the 45-foot rectangular pool at its deep end. "The side of the pool was originally landscaped with dwarf shrubs and cypresses that outgrew their narrow space and were recently replaced with bougainvillea and Mexican petunias," Kim says. "The detached jacuzzi was replaced with a fire pit and a wading pool area was added to the large rectangular pool."

VIEWS OF VEGAS

The outstanding home is set in an outstanding location as well. "From the driveway, we have the most incredible view of 'The Stratosphere' tower, a 60-story hotel only a half mile west of my street," Kim points out. "To the north, you can see the downtown hotels/casinos that are located on Fremont Street. We are also less than a mile from where they hold the music festival 'Life is Beautiful' and near City Hall and two major hospitals. We are only one block east of Las Vegas Blvd. (aka "The Strip")."

BRINGING THE OUTDOORS IN

With such magnificent landscaping on the property, Kim knew she needed to reference it in her home, in a landscape-driven design. "The first indoor plant I had was the bamboo in the atrium," she recalls. "After gutting out the previous overly decorated Kelly green with white trellis-covered interior and green carpet, I had a wooden tongue-and-groove deck installed, added a rock element in the middle and filled the square koi pond with dirt and turned it into a planter. The bamboo grows really well in there and doesn't need that much attention. I water it two times a month in moderate climate and every week in the hot summer months. Not only are cacti and succulents the easiest thing to grow in a desert climate, but I think they are simply beautiful, so I slowly added them to my atrium over the years."

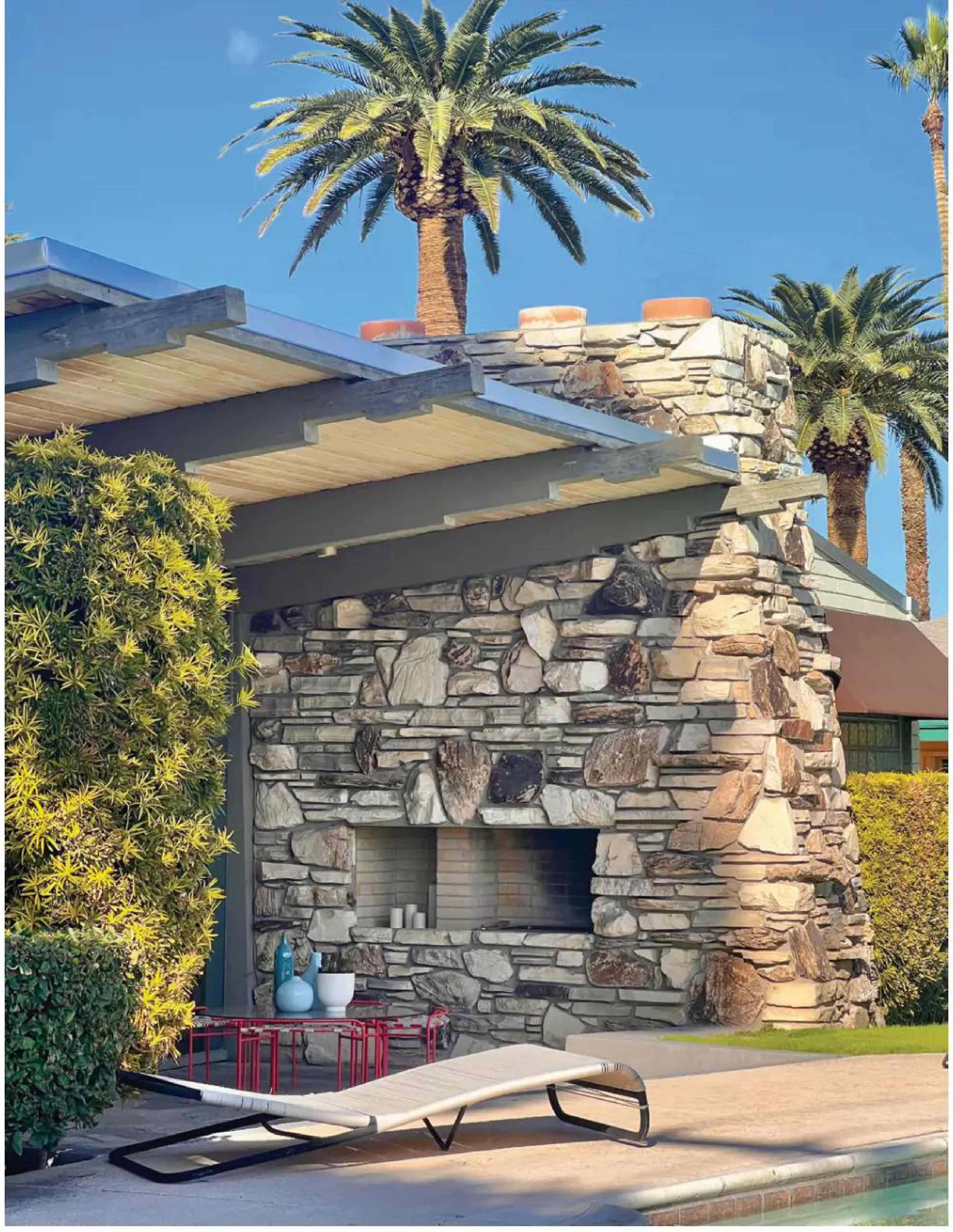
THE LIVING ROOM

"This room features the inside of the butterflied roof that is the higher room in the house with loads of natural light from the atrium on one side to the back patio with floor-to-ceiling windows on the opposite side," Kim points out. "You see the handcrafted stone fireplace wall that extends to the patio as a stone wall with built-in barbecue." To the left of fireplace is a TV/stereo cabinet that opens to both the living room and the master bedroom."

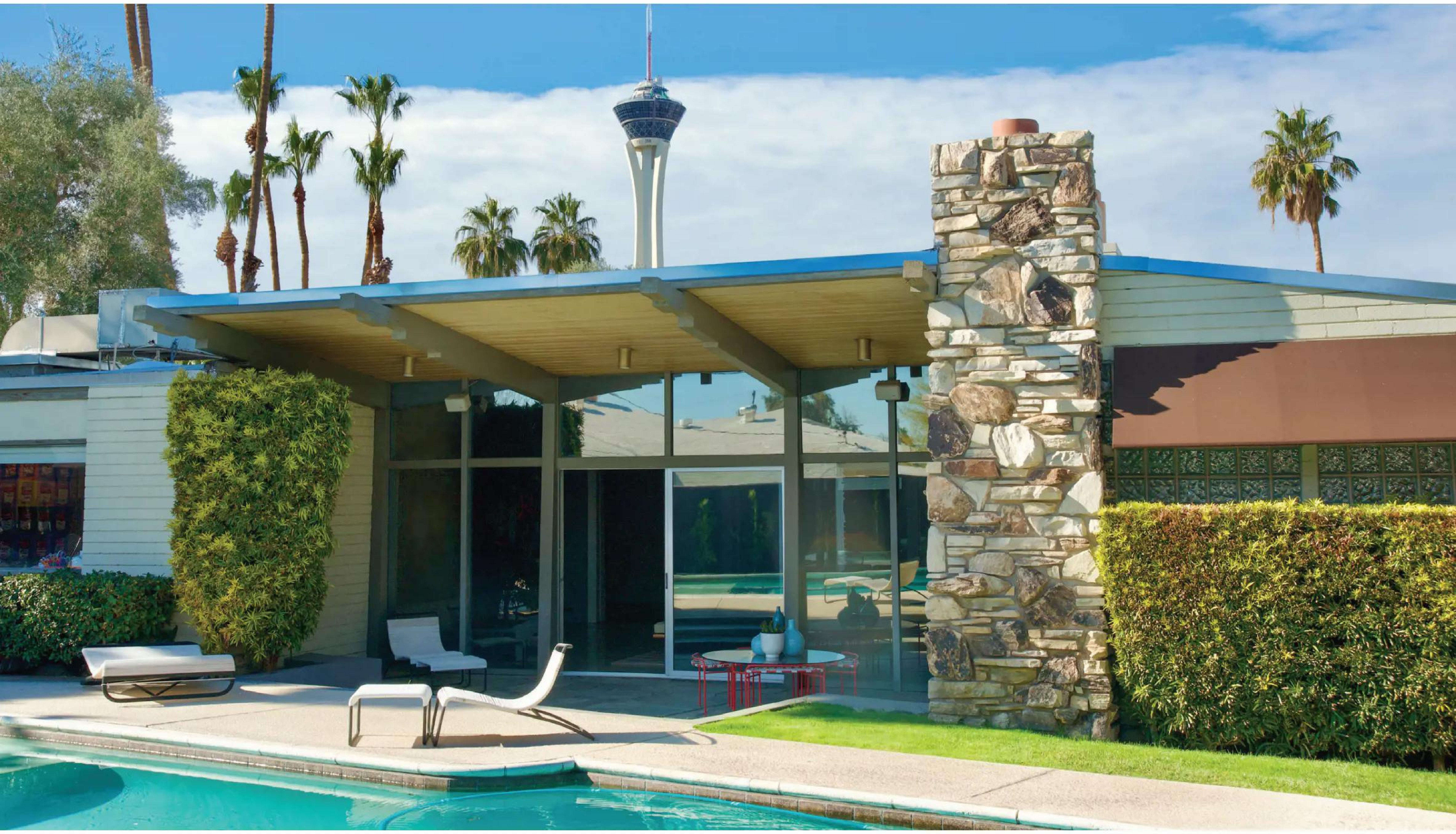
THE AWARD

After touring this MCM gem in Las Vegas, it comes as no surprise that it received recognition from the area's preservation organization. "I was awarded the Nevada Preservation Foundation plaque in April 2024, when my home was included in their Home + History Tour," Kim says. "What it means is that people really enjoy and appreciate these homes that in some older cities may not seem so old, but in our modern community, where old buildings often get imploded, seem ancient. It's great to keep some history in our young city and getting awarded makes me feel like this home will live on to be appreciated and stay authentic to its roots." ⚛

SEE RESOURCES, PAGE 88



above: The living room's stonework fireplace extends all the way outside to this impressive wing you see here. The two niches in the wall are built-in barbecues. **bottom:** The patio furniture is Case Study (from Modernize) metal and rope lounge chairs and low chairs with ottomans. Bertoia steel diamond chairs with black pads surround the fire pit.



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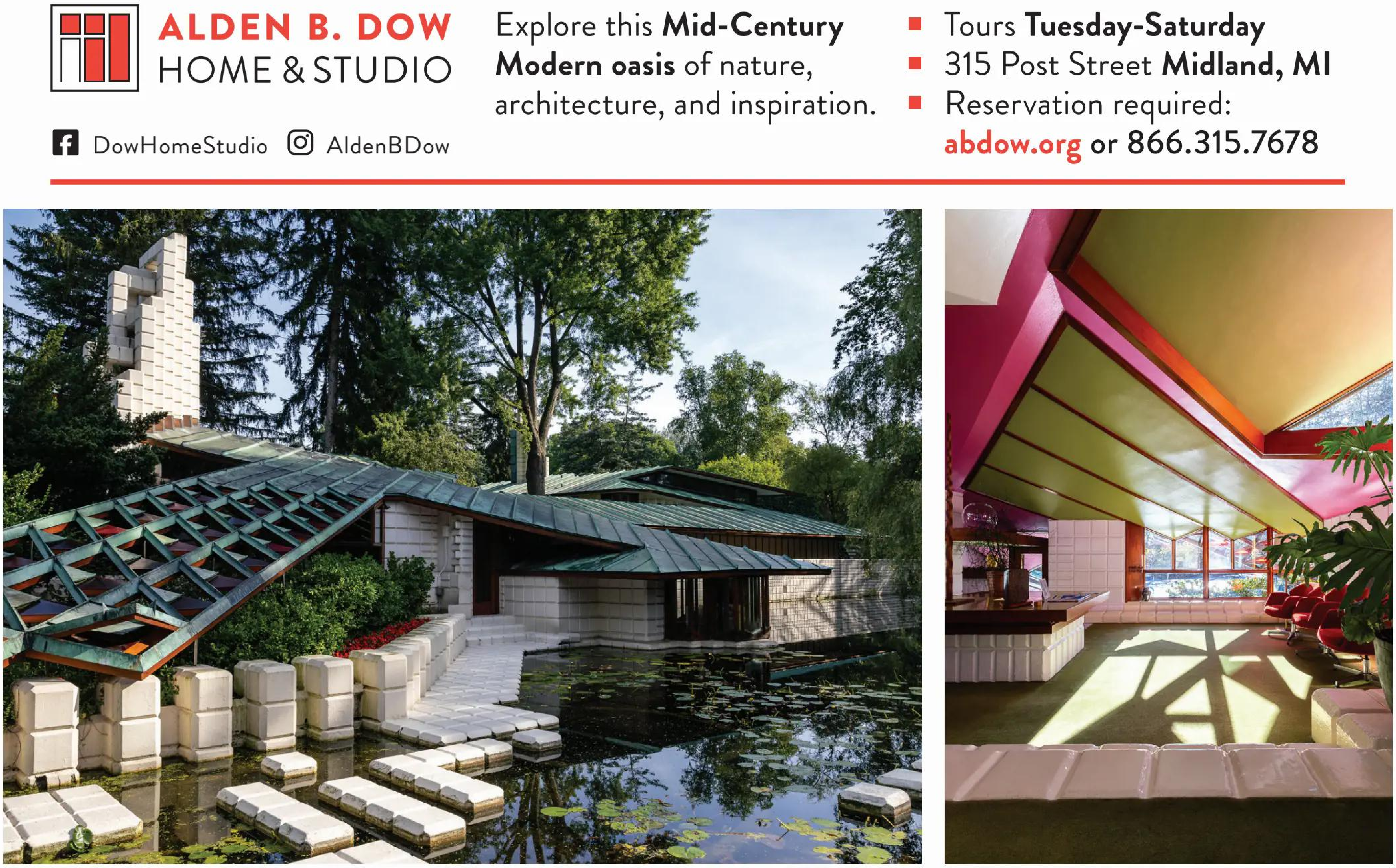
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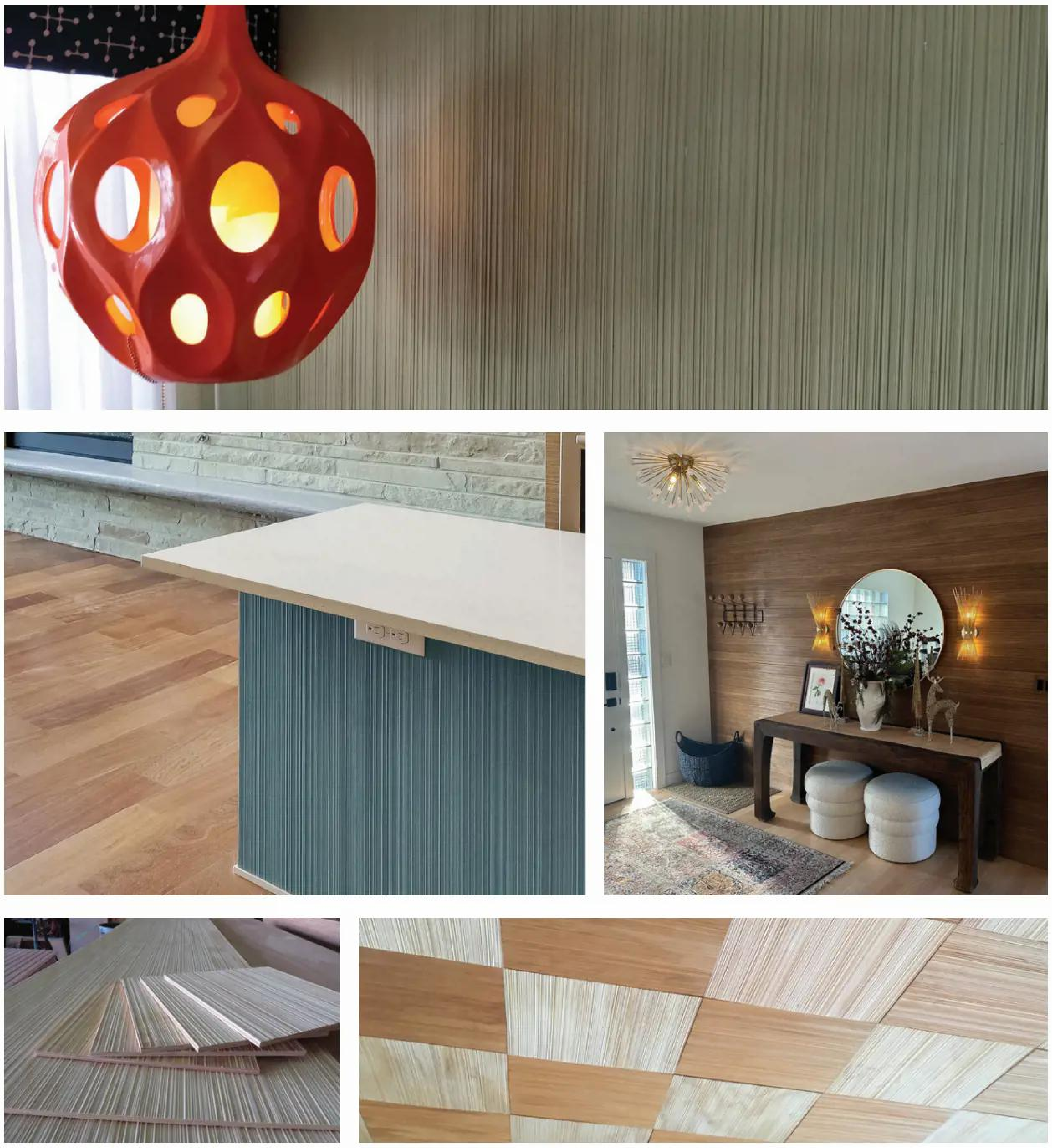
The Nevada Preservation Foundation (NPF) is a statewide nonprofit organization founded in 2014 dedicated to preserving and revitalizing Nevada's historic buildings and neighborhoods. Through engaging educational initiatives, NPF celebrates the lifestyles and pop culture of past and present residents who shape the essence of Las Vegas.

At the heart of NPF's mission is a volunteer-driven team of local historians who research, write and share compelling stories that highlight Nevada's rich heritage. By safeguarding the state's architectural landscape, NPF fosters a unique sense of place and helps build a more connected, engaged community for residents and visitors alike. To learn more or get involved, visit Nevada Preservation Foundation.

This beautiful home was featured in Home + History Las Vegas, NPF's signature heritage tourism festival, now in its 11th year. In a city known for its iconic mid-century architecture, this annual event is an unforgettable journey through local history. Next year's festival will take place April 16-19, 2026. Along with Home + History Las Vegas, NPF hosts monthly events throughout the year, offering even more opportunities to explore and celebrate Nevada's history. For details on the next festival and upcoming monthly events, visit Home + History Las Vegas.



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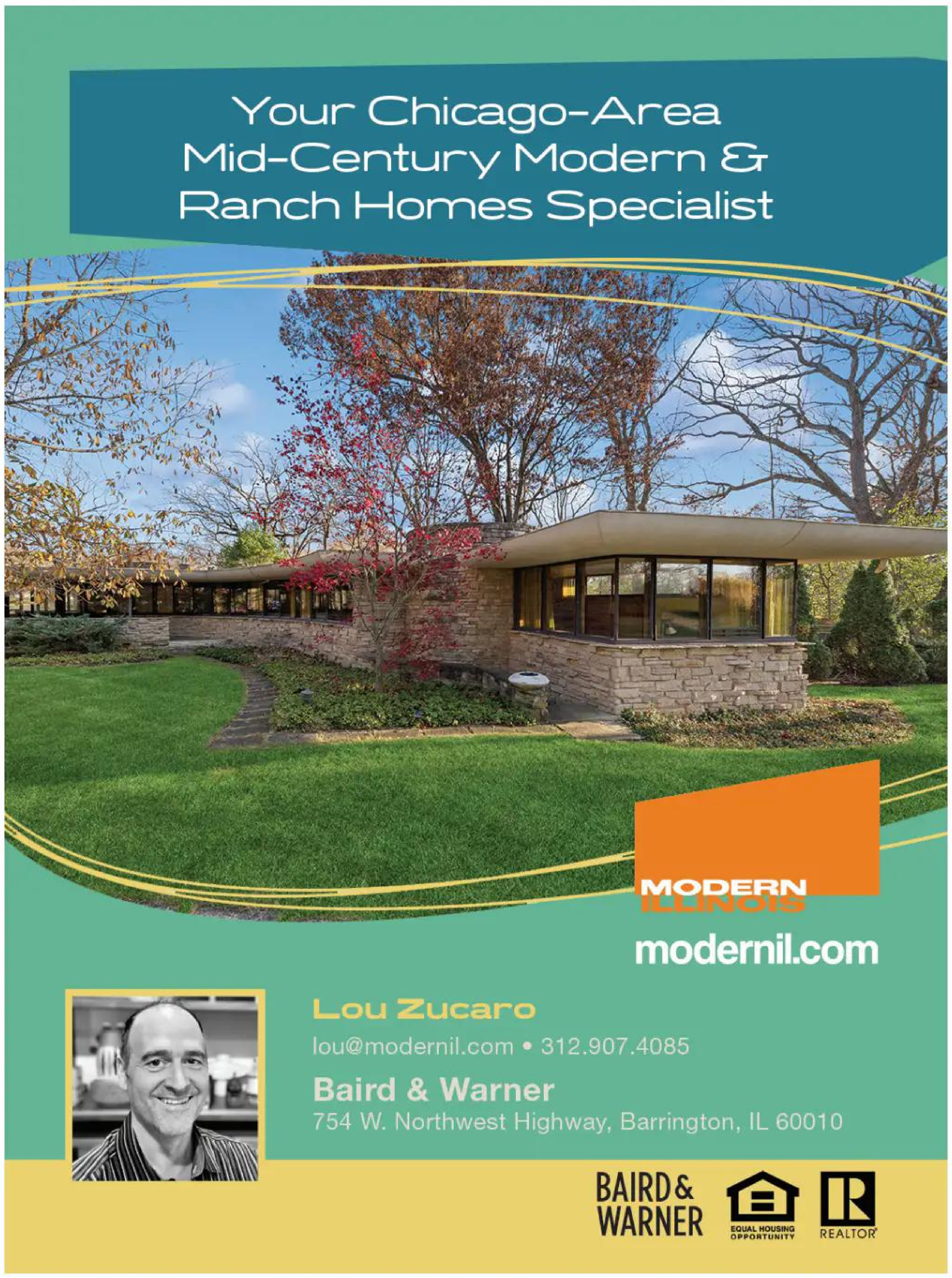

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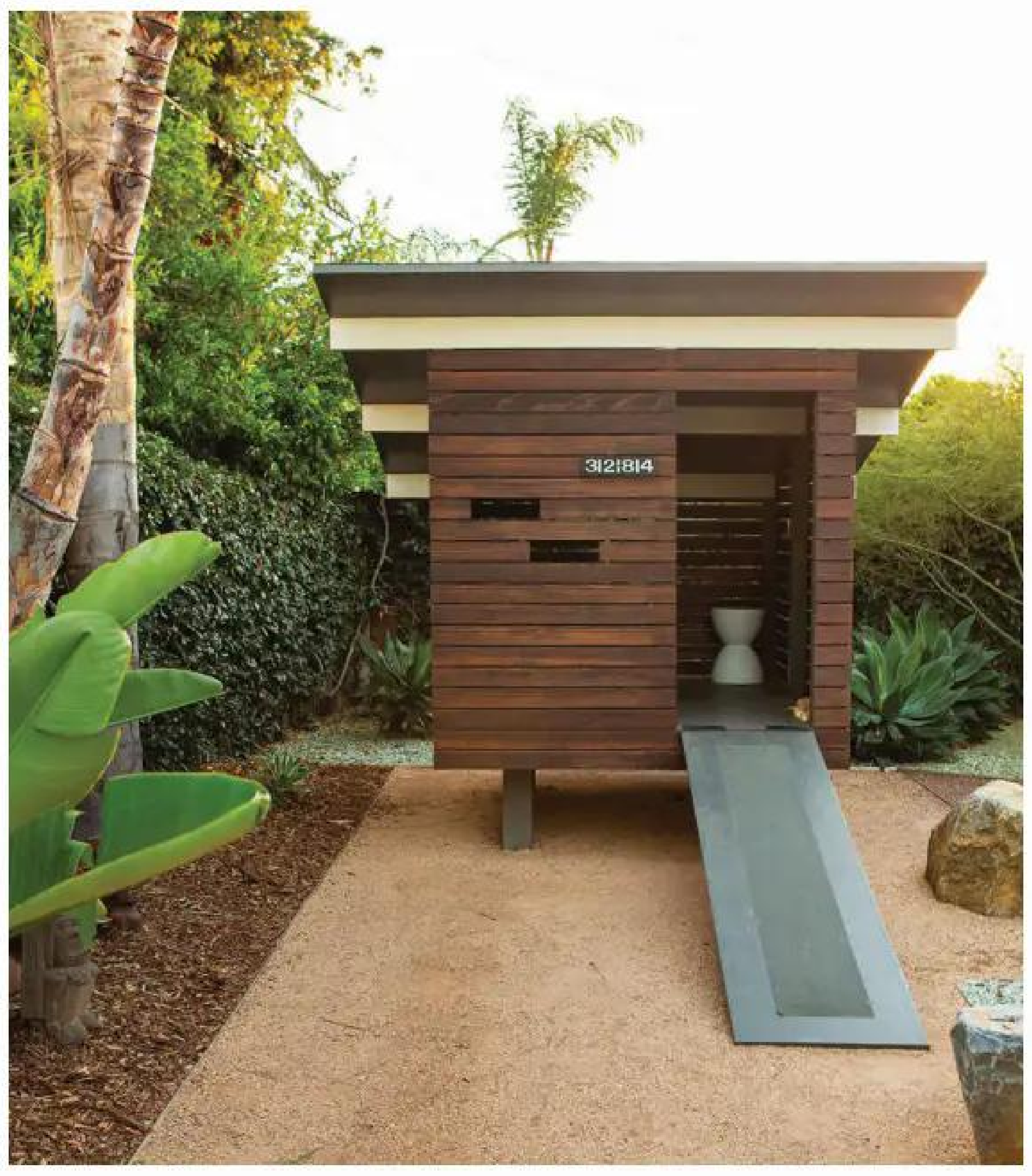

4

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A 1959 Eichler home renovation in Walnut Creek, California, adds color while maintaining the classic Mid Century Modern architecture. Credit: Daniel Blue

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These seven MCM ceiling fans are a perfect match for your modern rooms. Credit: Chase Daniel, styling by Whitney Smelser

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These pro tips from landscape architect James Drzewiecki will help get you started with your mid-century garden project or landscape designs. Credit: Ginkgo Leaf Studio

4. **RETRO PLAYHOUSES & BACKYARD TOYS FOR SUMMER FUN**
Want to add some fun to your backyard? We've rounded up mid mod goodies, from retro playhouses to ray guns that shoot water. If you don't have an outdoor space, we've included some toys for indoor camping. Credit: Bret Gum

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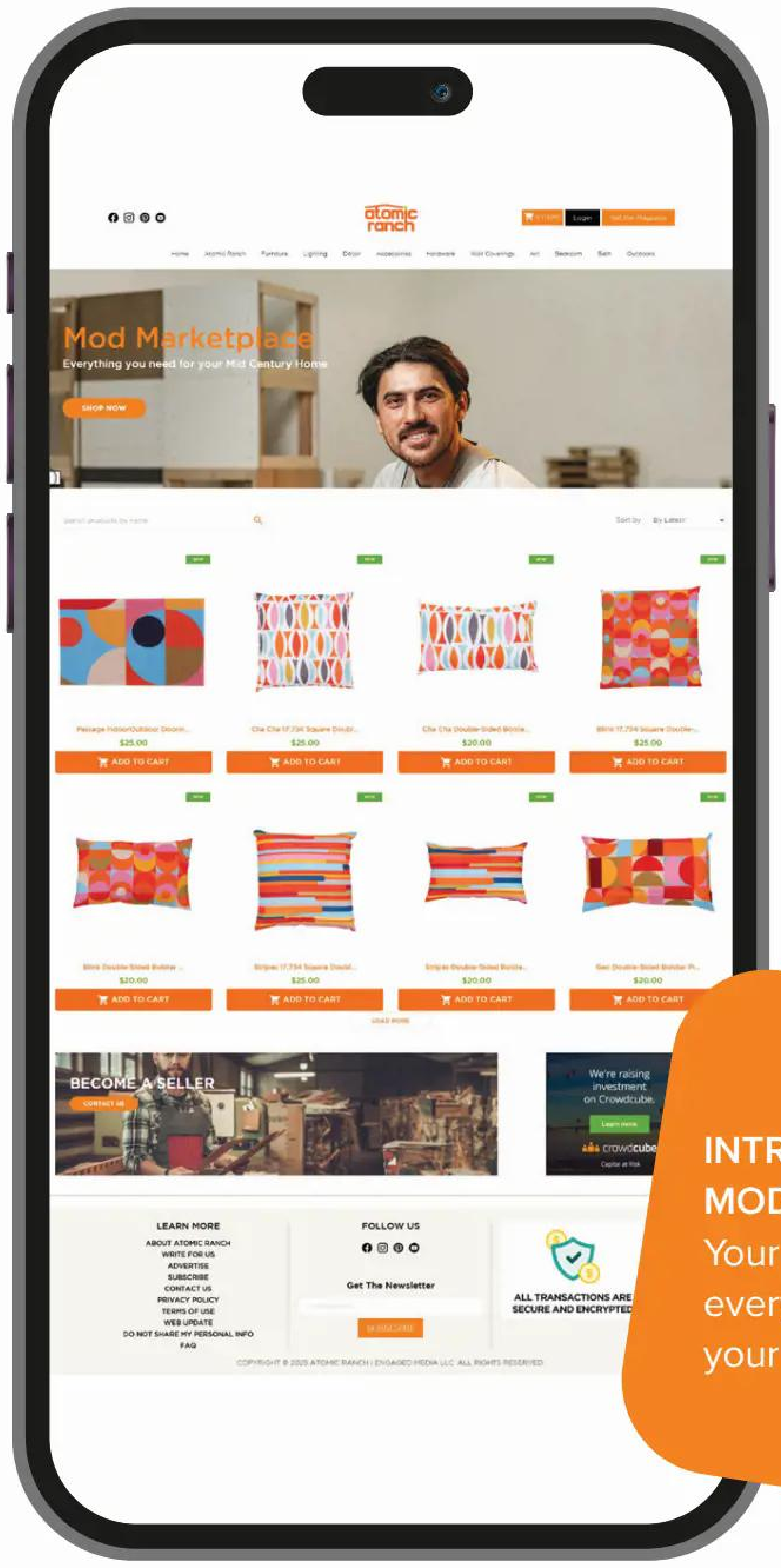
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A Custom Retrograde

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Countertops: Dekton Halo, cosentino.com/usa/colors/dekton/halo.
Backsplash: Fireclay, 2x8 subway, custom color, fireclaytile.com.
Range: BlueStar, bluestarcooking.com.
Fridge: Subzero, subzero-wolf.com/sub-zero.
Paint: Bittersweet, Dunn-Edwards, dunnedwards.com.

The Hollywood House of Riverside

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Bullet planter: Hip Haven, hiphaven.com.
Rocket art, forced perspective frames: Atomic Skyway, @atomicskyway.
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Wallpaper: Graham & Brown, grahambrown.com.
Rockets, sculptures: Jonathan Adler, jonathanadler.com.
Dinosaur sculptures: Brett Kern Art, @brettkernart on Instagram.
Z-Chairs: @totaldesign.co on Instagram.
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Tiki lamps: @madeyesforbiddenreef, @lanaitikidecor, @tiki_js on Instagram.
Tiki mugs: @minitikimeow, @oddrodney, @tikipop on Instagram.
Bed: Ikea, ikea.com.

Boise Beauty

Page 36

Living Room
Terrazzo floor: Concrete Collaborative, concrete-collaborative.com.

Lower Level
Flooring: Armstrong Flooring, armstrongflooring.com.
Countertops: Raw concrete, Caesarstone, caesarstoneus.com.

Banquette
Wallpaper: Le Corbusier, arte-international.com.

Kitchenette
Backsplash: SoliStone blue tile 1x6” stacked, Home Depot, homedepot.com.

Glass Palace in Palos Verdes

Page 48

HB128 bar cart: Horst Bruning, 1968.
Pavilion chair: Anderssen & Voll Norway.
In Between SK6 dining table: Sami Kallio.
VP1 flowerpot pendant: Verner Panton Denmark, 1968.
Serge Mouille floor lamp: France, 1952.
Eames lounge chair: Santos Palisander wood with olive green leather.
FK 150 sideboard: Fabricius & Kasthollm, Denmark, 1965.
PK61 marble coffee table: Poul Kjaerholm, Denmark, 1956.
Barcelona couch: Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, 1930.
Eames molded plastic side chairs: Ray and Charles Eames.
Pendant light: Fabricius & Kastholm, Denmark, 1963.
Series 7 counter stools: Arne Jacobsen, 1955.

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By **Jickie Torres**

Credit: Getty Images

IT'S NOT OFTEN THAT a playful pastime has a political connection, but that is the case for the sport of table tennis, which peaked in popularity in the 1950s and '60s. The sport was invented in late 19th century in England and was patented by David Foster as Whiff-Whaff. Tennis had been popular for about 30 years prior, and with the Victorian customs of after-dinner and parlor games, ping-pong, as it was also referred to since its inception, was an instant hit.

Its initial popularity was short-lived as a home sport and table tennis fell out of fashion after the turn of the century, but not before it had spread to Asia and Europe via the trade routes. There, its popularity ramped up, and by the 1920s it was an international sport with a world-wide championship.

The 1940s saw a resurgence for recreational play, and by the 1950s ping-pong was a global craze as China and Japan produced top champions and developed signature moves and styles. Ping-pong matches were broadcast on television and table tennis equipment was flooding the rec rooms and dens of every home and social club in America. At a time when the world had eyes on cultural revolutions happening in both the US and China, world diplomats and leaders saw the game as a way to bridge cultures and promote peace, culminating when China invited nine American World Table Tennis Championship players to the country for an exhibition match "ping-pong diplomacy," during which the U.S. ping-pong team toured China to play against the Chinese nation's team. The event marked an important turning point in China-U.S. relations and was viewed as a pivotal moment in the reopening of China to the world.

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